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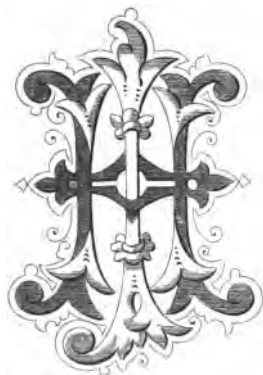
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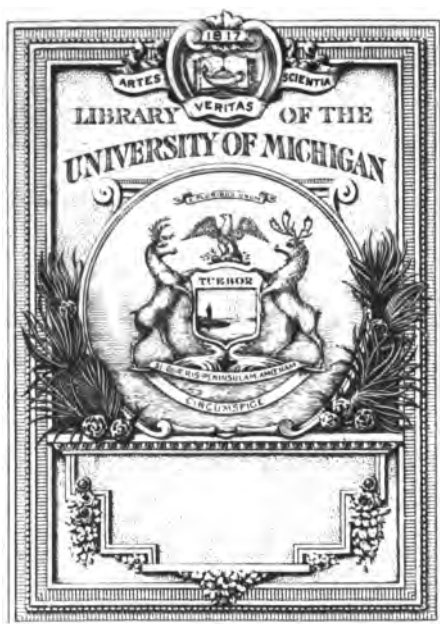
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# AN UNSATISFACTORY LOVER.



# AN UNSATISFACTORY LOVER.

A Novel.

*Margaret Wolfe* BY *Christina*  
MRS. HUNGERFORD,

AUTHOR OF

"MOLLY BAWN," "PHYLLIS," "THE HOYDEN,"  
"LADY PATTY," "APRIL'S LADY," Etc.

IN ONE VOLUME.



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# CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	I.	...	...	...	...	...	3
"	II.	...	...	...	...	...	11
"	III.	...	...	...	...	...	17
"	IV.	...	...	...	...	...	26
"	V.	...	...	...	...	...	34
"	VI.	...	...	...	...	...	41
"	VII.	...	...	...	...	...	50
"	VIII.	...	...	...	...	...	58
"	IX.	...	...	...	...	...	69
"	X.	...	...	...	...	...	81
"	XI.	...	...	...	...	...	91
"	XII.	...	...	...	...	...	100
"	XIII.	...	...	...	...	...	109
"	XIV.	...	...	...	...	...	121
"	XV.	...	...	...	...	...	134
"	XVI.	...	...	...	...	...	144
"	XVII.	...	...	...	...	...	154
"	XVIII.	...	...	...	...	...	164
"	XIX.	...	...	...	...	...	171
"	XX.	...	...	...	...	...	179
"	XXI.	...	...	...	...	...	189
"	XXII.	...	...	...	...	...	198
"	XXIII.	...	...	...	...	...	205

4-1-41  
 72



# **AN UNSATISFACTORY LOVER.**



# AN UNSATISFACTORY LOVER.

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## CHAPTER I.

The rose is living on her cheeks,  
The lily in her rounded chin ;  
She speaks but when her whole soul speaks,  
And then the two flow out and in  
And mix their red and white to make  
The hue for which I'd Paradise forsake.

THE old house, in spite of the decay that is fast compassing its ruin, is looking lovely in the rays of this hot noon sunshine. The windows are all blazing as though on fire, and seem to be seeking comfort from the cool green of the ivy that is hanging round them,—framing them, as it were,—hanging too closely, indeed, to some of them, as though suggesting the idea that a clipping would be good for it.

Decidedly the ivy does want clipping ; but, alas. the old house wants so many things ! “ It is difficult to grow old gracefully,” says Madame de Staël in one of her charming letters. No one has ever contradicted her, and indeed this old house, so very

much the worse for wear, is an argument on her side. Yet there are some beautiful features about its fading.

The terraces, for one thing,—or rather for two things,—are looking delightful to-day. They too are bathed in the lovely light that shows up all the flaws and ruined places. It shines indiscriminately on the broken body of the Diana over there, on the headless Cupid in this corner, on the exquisite old cedar on the lawn below, and on the two bare spaces in the balustrade where the pillars have been broken away, and through which the boys now sometimes creep, to the terror of the old nurse (who is as old as everything else in this sweet forsaken spot), and clamber down by the ivy branches, coming, as a rule, to the end of their journey with a tumble to the turf beneath.

In the garden beyond, the fountain is dead. Great Pan has ceased his playing. His pipe lies idle in his mouth; one of his hands is gone; and the big banks where flowers used to lie in profusion, enriching the air,—why, they are dead too, and dull, and forgotten. Yet there is about these banks a certain air as if some one had been desirous of restoring their fallen glories. A digging here, a prodding there. A boyish hand, perhaps; an amateur's hand, beyond question. It might be a girl's. Whatever it is, it seems to have done little good. The violets alone have proved grateful for the slight if honest care bestowed upon them: in the spring, year after year, they rush to deck this sad and lonely bank,

making glad the world around them by their priceless presence.

Just beyond this "wilderness of sweets" a little garden lies, all wooded round by evergreens, bays, laurels, and the red-flowered escallonia. In here, flowers grow apace, as swift as weeds, though weeds there are none,—only such dear flower-blossoms as are known to us from childhood,—things that cost us nothing, that would fetch but a poor price in any market, and that yet are so sweet to our souls,—so beyond all money!—flowers that speak to us with a living breath, a living beauty, and a thousand fond memories, past griefs, past joys.

This is Terry's garden.

Upon the green, sloping lawn before the house, three stately beech-trees, broad and strong and great, are spreading their branches; beneath them shadows lie. Far, far beyond them is a glimpse of the ocean, silver and green, but no sound comes from it to-day. This day is so still that hardly even a twitter from the birds disturbs the air.

Silence lies on everything.

A silence broken now, however, and in a most tempestuous fashion. Out from one of the drawing-room windows, brushing aside the too obtrusive ivy that looks as if it would have liked to catch her and detain her, springs a slight, girlish figure; after her rush two boys. For a moment, like a bird, she alights upon the terrace, poising herself as it were, then flies to the steps, and away.

Away across the sunlit lawn; away over the tiny, sparkling stream, her two hounds in full cry; away into the scented wood beyond, and out again. Across the road now, and through an opening in the hedge into another wood, and so on, and on, and on.

Swift as Atalanta she flies; no laugh upon her parted lips. This is business. But oh, here is an obstacle!

A high wall uprears itself before her: she has made a mistake, has come the wrong way. She glances back, her blue eyes full of the desire for victory, the excitement of the chase rendering every nerve tense. Yes, they are gaining on her. "The foe, they come, they come!"

This dreadful wall! Her eager and (it must be confessed) experienced eyes search it from side to side. There is very little time for search; the foes, and "those of her own household" too, draw nearer every second.

With a little wild brandishing of her arms she makes for a kindly projecting stone in the wall before her, that up to this had escaped her notice, and, catching by the mosses and grasses that decorate the wall's old sides, she clammers to the top of it, and, standing there, looks down at the other side.

It is steep,—horribly steep. Eagerly she looks to the right; no hope. As eagerly she looks to the left, and here her eyes stand still.

"Do you want to come down, Miss O'More?"



asks a voice that has something of surprised condemnation in it.

"Oh, is that you?" cries Terry, frantically. "Hurry! hurry! Help me down!" She is too excited at the moment to notice the disagreeable tone in his voice, but afterwards it comes back to her and rankles in her heart. "They'll be here in a second! Give me your hands!" She leans down towards him. "Oh, hurry—*do!*"

"One moment," says Mr. Trefusis, calmly, taking his gun from his shoulder. He has been sent out by his hostess to shoot a rabbit, as Miss Anson wants a rabbit-skin to make something for the coming bazaar that is to be held in the school-house.

"There isn't a moment!" cries Terry, wildly. "They"—looking back—"they have turned the corner! What!" stamping her foot impatiently on the top of the wall, "what *are* you doing with that gun?"

"Taking out the cartridge," says the Englishman, immovably. "I think it unwise—actually reprehensible—ever to let a gun out of one's possession loaded; and you say your brothers are coming?"

"Oh, bother your gun!" cries Terry. "Look here. If you won't help me, I'll jump."

"I beg you won't do that," says Mr. Trefusis, coming quickly to her. He has flung both the gun and the cartridges upon the ground. He *has* unloaded it, however. Now, placing one foot against the wall, he reaches up his arms to her, and she,

catching his hands, springs light as a feather to the ground.

"This is Den!" she cries, triumphantly. She breaks into a burst of merry laughter as the boys' heads now appear at the top of the wall. In a moment they have swung themselves over and are beside her. "I've won!" she cries, gayly. "That's another penny. It was fivepence yesterday. It's sixpence now." She laughs again; her laugh is like music, sweet, spontaneous, irresistible.

"Oh, it isn't fair!" cries the eldest boy, Max, who has the face of an angel, but a nature that I'm afraid even the strongest-minded angel would disown. "Mr. Trefusis helped you; we saw him. Of course if *we* had people to help *us*, we'd have won."

"He only gave me his hand. Wasn't that all, Mr. Trefusis?"

Trefusis regards her curiously. Does she know how anxious he is to give her his hand forever? But her question is still unanswered, and, being an Englishman, he answers it to the letter.

"Both hands, I think," says he. Somehow the answer seems to militate against her in the eyes of the two pursuers.

"There! you see!" says Geoffrey, the second boy, who is the very image of his sister. "He thinks it unfair, too!"

"Do you?" asks the girl, turning to Trefusis hotly. "Oh, yes,"—resenting his hesitation, which arises only from a desire to understand the situation,

—"I can see you do. I," indignantly, "I'm very sorry I asked you to help me at all. I could have jumped it quite easily by myself."

"I am glad, however, I was on the spot," returns Trefusis, calmly,—with, indeed, most aggravating calmness. "You might have seriously hurt yourself if you had jumped down here; sprained your ankle, or——"

"Nonsense!" says Terry, shortly.

"There have been cases of the kind, however," continues Trefusis, coloring slightly. "And, besides, to run so much as you do, do you think it wise?" "Ladylike" was on the tip of his tongue, but Providence came to his aid and suppressed it.

"I don't think about it at all," says Miss O'More, with a little tilt of her chin: there is distinct resentment in her glance. "If *you* object to running, then don't run. As for me, I am now going to run again—home. Come, boys."

The boys are at her side in a moment.

"If you think I didn't win that last penny fairly," says she, "I'll race you all over again. But you must give me the same odds. To that tree over there," pointing to a distant birch.

"All right," cry the boys in a breath. They have thrown themselves into running attitudes, and Terry is about to start, when Trefusis comes quickly forward:

"Miss O'More, a word. I have a letter from your cousin for you: I was going to your place

with it. She hopes you will come up to dinner to-night."

Whatever Terry's cousin may be feeling on the subject, there is unmistakable hope in the face of Trefusis.

"You—I may tell her you are coming?" says he, seeing with a curious pang at his heart that she has not even cared to open the letter he has given her.

"Oh, I don't know," returns she, carelessly. "I'll think about it. At all events, I'll send her word."

"But——"

"There isn't time for 'buts,'" cries she, with a rather malicious little laugh at him. "Now—Geoff—Max—I'm off!"

And, like a second Atalanta, away she flies again, like an arrow from its bow.

## CHAPTER II.

O light of dead and of dying days !  
O Love ! in thy glory go,  
In a rosy mist and a moony haze,  
O'er the pathless peaks of snow.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
But what is left for the cold gray soul  
That moans like a wounded dove ?

THROUGH the wood they have flown all three, and now into an open field beyond, that runs by the side of the high-road. Here a young man, riding leisurely along, stands up in the stirrups and calls aloud to Terry. Turning, she sees him.

"A pax ! a pax !" cries she to her brothers, whereon they all troop down to the wall to talk to the man on horseback, a very tall and very well set-up young man, and that uncommon thing, a handsome Irishman.

"Are you going up to the Hall to-night ?" he calls over the thickening hedge of furze and blackberry behind which Terry is standing on tiptoe with a vain hope of seeing him face to face. Finding this impossible, she now smiles at him, though he does not know it, through an opening in the bushes. "I've had a line from Fanny. But I want to know if you are going."

"Why ?" she asks.

"Only because, if you aren't, I shan't go either," says her cousin, Laurence O'More.

"Oh, well, set your mind at rest. I'm going," says Terry.

"Where on earth are you?" asks Laurence, peering right and left. "I wish I could see you: I'd know what you really meant then."

"Do you mean to insinuate that my word is not as good as my bond?" asks Terry. She clammers up a break in the bank and shows him a lovely face, just between two branches of furze that are heavily and most sweetly in bloom.

"Well?" she says, saucily, "am I going to Fanny's to-night, or am I not?"

"Oh, it wasn't about that I wanted to question you," says the young giant on horseback. "It was——" he hesitates. "Was that Trefusis I saw you speaking to just now in the lower field?"

"Yes."

"He seems to haunt you."

"Don't be stupid," says Miss O'More, turning a little red, however.

"Oh, stupid! Mark my words," says her cousin, leaning over his saddle towards her, as if to emphasize his words,—perhaps to watch her face more closely; "he wants to marry you."

"Pouf! Go home!" says Miss O'More. She scrambles down from the bank again and goes on her homeward way. But she resigns that penny to the boys. She will run no more. She is tired.

"Terry," says Geoffrey, twisting his arm into hers, "why did you tell Larry you were going to Fanny's to-night, and Mr. Trefusis that you didn't know whether you would go or not?"

"Because Mr. Trefusis asks too many questions," returns his sister, with a disdainful little shake of her charming head.

If she had known that he was going to ask her yet one more question to-night, perhaps she would not have gone to dine with Fanny, after all.

\* \* \* \* \*

Terry O'More, the eldest of the O'Mores now living, had been christened Terentia by her mother. The late Mrs. O'More had so adored her husband that when her first baby came she had feared to let this opportunity pass of complimenting him and perpetuating his beloved name, lest a second opportunity for doing so should never arise. As a fact, two other opportunities did arise, and the latter put an end to her pretty, graceful, tender life. Her husband followed her to the land of shadows ten years later, killed by a fall from his horse while hunting, and from that time Terry had lived practically alone. Terry she was, for Terentia had been felt to be too impossible a name in a household where the rents had been lowered to such an extent that carriages were put down, and the box stalls where the horses used to stand were rotting.

On her father's death, her cousin, Mrs. Adare, had offered her and the two boys a home at the

Hall, but Terry would not leave the old house, though, indeed, the four walls were all that was left to her, and about a hundred a year. Even old Miss Bridget O'More, her aunt, who lived at Derrymain, about two miles from More House, Terry's home, and who, though "wallowing in money," as the peasants said, was proverbially close-fisted, had declared herself willing to saddle herself for the rest of her days with her brother's children, but Terry, though much pressed to it by Fanny Adare, would not consent to go beneath another roof as long as her own old roof would stand.

Then efforts had been made to provide the desolate child, who was only sixteen, with a companion, but against this she set her face resolutely, and, with a certain force that startled her listeners and made Miss Bridget shake her head over her future, declined to live with any stranger. She had the boys, she said, Max, who was fourteen, and Geoffrey, who was twelve, as promising a pair of pickles as one could meet with in a day's march. Besides which, there was Nurse. She would stay with her.

Mrs. Ryan, on being questioned, gave it to be understood that wild horses wouldn't draw her out of More House.

And Mrs. Ryan, it was felt, was a force in herself. When "the masther lay stretched," as she graphically and with heart-rending sobs described it, it had been intimated to her by one of the maids that there would be little hope of wages in the future, the



"masther" having died most hopelessly in debt, and that she had better join the others and make a clean exit. Whereupon bad times arose for that maid. Mrs. Ryan, full of grief, had fallen upon her tooth and nail, and boxed her ears soundly.

After that she had settled down, seen all the other servants out of the house, and accepted a quarter of the old wages she was supposed to receive (there had been great difficulty about the paying of anything during the last few years), accepting that only because her darling, her foster-child, would not be content unless she shared something with her besides her troubles. Terry was the light of her eyes, as unfortunately, in some cases, she was the light of other eyes too.

Thus Terry carried the day, and lived alone in the old tumble-down beautiful house, with only the boys and the nurse to keep her company, and without actual chaperonage of any kind; yet such was the girl that no one ever said there was anything wrong in the doing of this thing. Terry was Terry; no breath of scandal could come near her. Even the rector's sister, who made all the parish "sit up" occasionally, had never a word to say against Terry; at least, a word that signified. It was not in Miss Gabbett's nature to let any one go quite scot-free. Even her brother, the rector, she condemned at times, and the rector was a saint. Perhaps that was why she was his sister: saints have always burdens to bear.

However, Terry escaped very well at her hands ; though her brothers certainly did not. Everything she spared Terry in the way of oburgation she added to the vials of wrath that she daily poured upon the boys. More House was always under her supervision.

Poor old More House, once so beautiful, now in the last stages of decay. The boys have turned its name into a joke. "We don't want More House," they say ; "what we do want is more furniture." And indeed furniture is at a low ebb in the large rooms that look now like barracks vacated. As time went on, the tables and chairs and knick-knacks had fallen asunder, and been consigned, not to the attics, as with most people, but to the kitchen fire, fire-wood being an article unknown of late years. And these articles, thus brought to the hammer of life, had never afterwards been renewed. There are a few things still in the drawing-room and dining-room and bedrooms, but Want stalks through the house, rampant at waking hours, mercifully forgotten in the dark moments of the silent night.

Poor Terry ! She makes that very uncertain hundred a year go a long way, the longer because of the rector, who would not take a penny from her for the education of the boys, and who yet drills them, and scolds them, and grinds them, as though he were getting a thousand a year for them. Good rector ! Your reward is in the courts above ; a great, a high reward !

## CHAPTER III.

Oh, her cheek, her cheek was pale,  
Her voice was hardly musical;  
But your proud gray eyes grew tender,  
Child, when mine they met,  
With a piteous self-surrender,  
Margaret.

"JUST in time," whispers Mrs. Adare, giving Terry's hand a warm pressure as the girl enters the drawing-room at the Hall, a few hours later. Mrs. Adare (Fanny, as her intimates call her) is a young and pretty woman, a cousin of Terry's, who had married Tom Adare, the owner of the Hall and Master of the Hounds in this county, almost five years ago. An excellent match as far as money goes, and a still better one in that love alone made it.

"I was so afraid I was late," whispers Terry back. She is looking charming,—a little flushed from excitement attendant on the fear that she was keeping them all waiting. Her lovely brown hair, with its threads of gold running through it, is lying loosely on her forehead, half concealing, half betraying the whiteness of it, and her dark-blue eyes are brilliant. She is dressed in black, a grenadine skirt on a black silk one (the latter had been her mother's),

and, though undoubtedly it has seen service, still somehow it looks lovely on her—or she looks lovely in it. It certainly throws out the exquisite fairness of her soft childish neck and arms. She has no gloves,—gloves are so expensive,—and no rings on her slender fingers, and nothing round her throat, and, indeed, not a jewel anywhere. Yet to Trefusis, standing by the window at the far end of the room, talking to Miss Anson, she seems the most delicately beautiful thing he has ever seen in all his life.

He is too much a society man to show his thoughts, yet all the time he is talking of the last new novel to Miss Anson he is thinking of Terry. How fair she is, how self-possessed! With what a perfect air she greets her friends! Is this the same girl who was running wild as a roe through the fields this morning? What “infinite variety”! And that little trick of half closing her eyes!

“Gerrard, you will take Miss O’More in to dinner,” says his hostess, softly. He smiles gratefully at her. He had, indeed, asked her earlier in the day to let him have Terry as his companion at dinner. He now moves towards her, not seeing the frown on the face of the girl he has just left, who would very willingly have accompanied him anywhere. Fanny does, and smiles a little. Trefusis’s secret, if it is one, is no longer unknown to her. She is an old friend of his, and meeting him in England last winter had asked him to come and stay with her.

He had come, a month ago, had seen Terry, and had been conquered. He has hardly cared to disguise his admiration for her; certainly not from Fanny, who is delighted at this chance of a good marriage for her cousin,—a penniless cousin, and a cousin extremely dear to her. But how will Terry act? Will she refuse him, or accept? Fanny's kindly heart sinks within her, as she thinks of the girl's impetuous, honest nature. If she does not love him, how will it be then? All through dinner she trembles for the result of the interview that she is almost certain Trefusis is bent on arranging between Terry and himself to-night.

Indeed, when she finds, after dinner, that Terry and Trefusis have disappeared, into the conservatory presumably, her nervousness grows on her. That foolish girl—if she, Fanny, could only have said a word to her, about the boys for instance and their good——

“This is your doing, I suppose,” says her brother, in an infuriated tone. She looks up. Laurence O'More, his handsome face alive with wrath, is looking down at her where she sits near one of the curtains.

“What is my doing?” she asks, with the access of indignation that guilty people usually acquire.

“I tell you what,” says Laurence, hotly, “Trefusis won't thank you for this, when it is all over.”

“The original riddler was nothing to you,” says

his sister, meanly hiding herself from his wrath beneath a pretence of ignorance. "What have I done, Larry?"

"You've let that fellow propose to Terry. Pshaw! as if I didn't know what he's taken her into the conservatory for! As if you didn't know too! And a very sisterly act on your part, I must call it!—knowing, as you do, how—I—regard Terry! But there is one satisfaction," maliciously; "she won't have him. She'll refuse him; and then how will you explain yourself to him?"

"She will have him; she must," says Mrs. Adare, solemnly. "Larry," catching one of the tails of his coat as he angrily leaves her, "come back. Listen to me. Of course I know you have a sort of fancy for her——"

"Fancy for her!"

"Well," with the irritating air of one who is willing to go all lengths to gain a purpose, "a sort of love for her."

"A *sort* of love!"

"Well, isn't it a sort of love?" cries Mrs. Adare. "It can come to nothing. She hasn't a penny; and you have about two hundred a year. Do you propose to marry on that? Don't be a fool, Larry; and don't be selfish, either. Give Terry her chance."

"Oh, as for her chance," says he, "I've nothing to do with that. She cares nothing for me. What I object to is your driving her into a marriage with a man for whom she cares nothing either." He

pauses, and then, "After all, it doesn't matter," says he: "she will refuse him."

\* \* \* \* \*

Has she refused him? As Terry comes into the hall half an hour later, cloaked and hooded for her journey home, Mrs. Adare comes up to her over the marble pavement of the hall. She has been dying to see her before, but it is so hard to get away from one's older guests.

"Terry! Something has happened? He has asked you to marry him?"

"Yes."

"And you?" breathlessly.

"I said I didn't know."

"Oh, Terry!"

"Well," with a sad if defiant glance, "I *don't* know."

"You don't!" Mrs. Adare looks at her. In her tone there is reproach, vehement but repressed. "There," hurriedly, "go home. I'll come over in the morning. But," holding her, as the girl with a rather glad activity goes by her, "you *will* say 'Yes,' dearest? Think of the boys!"

"I have," slowly. "I thought of them. That was why I didn't say 'No.'"

"Oh, Terry!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Adare knows little sleep to-night. Honestly concerned for her cousin's welfare, she lies awake, thinking of her future. This thought keeps her

wakeful, and in the morning at breakfast it is still with her. She cannot refrain from casting curious glances at Trefusis during the meal, and is discomfited by finding him quite as calm as usual.

Is he so sure, then? Even if he is, he should not show it. "I hope he will change his manner before he goes to see her this morning," says she to herself. Oh, if only she could give him a hint! but that is, of course, impossible.

Breakfast over, she makes a slight apology to her guests,—the Hall, as a rule, is always full,—and hurries away to Terry. First, however, she sends off a note to her aunt,—hers and Terry's,—giving her a hint as to the situation. Old Miss Bridget might be useful on such an occasion as this, and no chance should be neglected to induce Terry to accept an alliance that will raise her from absolute poverty to the light of day.

Not finding Terry down-stairs, Mrs. Adare runs up to the girl's bedroom.

"What are you doing here?" she cries, gayly. "Making yourself lovely for him?"

"No. Hiding, I think," says Terry, with a rather nervous laugh. "Fanny,"—her eyes fill with frightened tears,—"*do you think I must see him to-day?*"

"Not only that," says Fanny, with decision, and refusing to see the tears, though her heart is aching, "but you must say 'Yes' to him."

"Must I say that?"



"My dear girl," says Fanny, "you will be mad if you say anything else. What do you expect, Terry? Gerrard is a gentleman. He is very well off; he is next heir to a title, and he is extremely good-looking."

"Is he?"

"In love with you? I never saw any one so head-over-ears in love with any one in my life," says Mrs. Adare. "If that is what troubles you, I——"

"Oh, no, it isn't that," says Terry, carelessly, indifferently,—with indeed such an assured air about his being in love with her, that Fanny laughs outright.

"That goes without telling, I suppose," says she. "What a conceited little cat! Well, what is your question, then? His money?"

"No; his looks. You said he was extremely good-looking."

"So does everybody, unless you are the solitary exception. Some people call him downright handsome!"

"You mean Miss Anson," says Terry, lifting her shoulders. She hesitates, and then, "His face is very long," says she.

"So is his purse," returns Fanny, sententiously.

"Still, I——"

"Nonsense, Terry! His face is not long." She is looking at the girl searchingly. "It is not as short as Larry's, certainly, but——"

"What has Larry got to do with it?" asks Terry, with a quick frown.

"Nothing, I hope. Yet sometimes I cannot help thinking, Terry, that you give a good many of your thoughts to him."

"You are wrong, then,—in a sense. I know what you mean; but Larry is only like a brother to me."

"I am afraid he does not feel like a brother towards you."

"Oh, as for that, it is all nonsense," says Terry, blushing hotly. "He only fancies he is in love with me. He won't break his heart over me, anyway."

"No, he will never break his heart over anything," says his sister, thoughtfully. "Larry is a typical Irishman, all storm and energy to-day, all sunshine and indifference to-morrow; raging at his fate in the morning, and telling you a good story in the afternoon. Larry is delightful; he's a darling! If any one knows Larry, I do. He wouldn't suit you, Terry."

"I wish you wouldn't take such a wrong view of it all," says Terry, angrily. "I am as little in love with Larry as I am with——"

"No, don't say it," says Fanny, interrupting her quickly. "Try to be in love with Gerrard, Terry. Think what a help he would be to you and the boys. You know you won't let me help you; but a husband—you could not refuse help from him. And Max ought soon to go to college, and——" she grows

silent for a moment; then, "You *will* accept him, Terry?"

"I don't know. I——"

"What did you say to him last night?"

"Just that. That I didn't know."

"But you must know now! All last night! You must have thought last night. If you don't care for any one else, I implore you not to throw away this chance. You—you don't care for any one else?"

"No, not in that way."

"Then you——?"

"I'll say 'Yes,'" says the girl, abruptly. "It will be for the boys."

"For yourself too, darling! He is one of the best fellows in the world; he——" She breaks off: a loud familiar voice can be heard outside. It is the voice of Miss Bridget O'More.

"Here is Aunt Bridget," says Fanny, nervously.

"You have told her!" says Terry, rising and gazing at her cousin with keen reproach.

"Well, it had to be told sooner or later," says Fanny, airily.

## CHAPTER IV.

Whether we die or we live,  
Matters it now no more :  
Life has naught further to give.

MISS BRIDGET O'MORE stalks into the room, her face one great aggressive smile. As her face is about the broadest thing on record, as far as faces go, the smile passes all bounds. The smile of the famous Cheshire cat isn't in it, by comparison. Miss Bridget is tall, stout, and vigorous. When she speaks she shouts. This latter delightful trait (that, as a rule, reduces the nervous stranger to the verge of lunacy) arises probably from the fact that she has insisted on getting her false teeth from the cheapest man in Dublin, and therefore unless she yells no one can understand her : there are times when she does not understand herself.

It has been suggested to her by long-suffering relatives that she would gain in the saving to her lungs if she would only go to a good dentist ; but to save in purse is the joy of Miss Bridget O'More.

Having considerably more money than she knows what to do with, it is Miss Bridget's chief delight to pile up sum after sum and invest them caretully. She might have been of immense good to Terry and

the boys since (and long before) their father's death, but, beyond that one offer on Mr. O'More's demise, she has carefully refrained from mixing herself up with their affairs until now,—now when she hears that Terry, the despised because impecunious Terry, is about to form an alliance with a man rich enough to satisfy even her dreams of avarice.

She comes beaming into the room, her skirts well caught up, her ponderous feet showing.

"My good girl! This is excellent news!" she cries, falling upon Terry and nearly stifling her in a huge embrace. "Good heavens! fancy such luck coming to you! Who'd have thought a man as rich as he is would have cast a second thought on a lean little creature like you?"

Here she catches Fanny's eye, who is gesticulating to her frantically behind Terry's back. Fanny is fast growing desperate. After all the trouble she has taken to bring Terry to the desired point, now here comes this meddling silly old woman, saying the very things that are likely to make the girl angry enough to break through her late decision!

"I knew you'd be glad, Aunt Bridget," says Fanny, in a delightful tone. "But I must confess I disagree with you about Terry in one way. I think," laughing brightly, "Gerrard Trefusis will have the best of the bargain. But it is a good match all the same."

"Such wealth!" says Miss Bridget, uplifting her hands.

"Oh, not that so much," says Fanny, prettily. "He is so good, so true, so handsome."

"It is an epoch in her life," says Miss Bridget, solemnly. "Terentia, you must have a new gown for Fanny's dance. And"—with overwhelming generosity—"I shall give it to you. When does your dance come off, Fanny? Next month?"

Terry, who has not spoken up to this, now turns suddenly upon the speaker.

"I don't want it!" says she, clearly, distinctly. The words read rudely, but Terry does not look rude as she stands there, her face very white, her eyes flashing. She looks only troubled, and perhaps a little haughty.

"It isn't what you want, it is what I want!" says Miss Bridget, autocratically. "I insist, now that you are engaged to so—so"—warned by another frown from Fanny, she changes the word on her lips—"so worthy a young man, on your appearing properly dressed for once in your life!"

Terry makes an angry movement. "One would think I had been improperly dressed up to this," says she, indignantly.

"You have certainly been shabby at times," says Miss Bridget, who, not being troubled with nerves of her own, is indifferent to the sensibility of other people. "I tell you I shall give you a new dress for Fanny's dance: you want one badly."

"And yet you have waited to give it to me until I had promised to marry a man with money," says

the girl, bitterly. "I don't want new frocks now. I won't have them."

"Dear Terry," says Fanny, in a low tone, who is in an agony lest Terry shall refuse this charming offer from their parsimonious old aunt, "think."

"I *am* thinking, and—no, I don't want it," says Terry, obstinately. "If Mr. Trefusis has liked me in shabby frocks, I don't see why I should put on silks and satins just because I am engaged to him. Perhaps he wouldn't like me in them. King Cophetua"—with a cold smile, full of *hauteur*—"might not like his beggar-maid without her rags." She turns contemptuously away.

"What does she mean?" demands Miss Bridget, angrily. "What does the girl mean, Fanny?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all," says Mrs. Adare. "She is only—you know—just a little *tête montée*." She puts her fingers lightly to her own head to illustrate her meaning. But this, too, is Greek to Miss Bridget.

"I know nothing of kings!" cries that irate old lady; "though," with a cruel glance at Terry, "of beggary I know much; and as to your foreign languages, Fanny, I would ask you not to trouble me with them. Indecent, I call them. What I've got to say, and I say it in proper English, is that Terentia must and shall be well dressed for your dance."

"Ah! take care what you are doing," cries Terry, mockingly. "What if he no longer fancies me when you have pranked me out!"

"Stuff!" says Miss Bridget. The word "stuff" has been in her mind all along, indeed, and she has hardly heard Terry's little sarcasm, so intent is her mind on discovering for how small a sum she may make her niece presentable in the eyes of her prospective lover. Yet it can't be stuff. Silk it must be,—at least the underskirt. "A dress you must have, for I am determined you shall appear as my niece should."

"I have been your niece for eighteen years," says Terry, coldly.

"Fanny, this is insolence!" says Miss Bridget, rising.

"Not at all," says Fanny, rising too. "Not at all," she whispers hurriedly in Miss Bridget's ear. "Mere excitement. Dear Aunt Bridget, have patience. When a niece of yours is going to marry a man with twenty thousand a year and a title in prospect, no wonder her wits go a bit astray."

That touch about the title is even more subtle than the one about the money. Miss Bridget sinks back in her chair, much mollified.

Fanny goes over to where Terry is standing, angry, hurt, her face a very picture of disgust.

"Look here, Terry; don't be a fool," says her cousin, softly. "Every girl likes a new dress. And you are just like the rest: so don't give yourself airs. It may be proper pride to refuse things from me, who am only your cousin (though I don't think so, mind), but to refuse them from Aunt Bridget is



pure folly. Pull yourself together, you little goose, and see how things are. You will want your trousseau from her later on. I only wish to goodness"—she laughs, and turns to where Miss Bridget is sitting—"that Aunt Bridget would see her way to giving *me* a gown!"

To Mrs. Adare's everlasting astonishment, Aunt Bridget rises to the bait that had been thrown without any meaning.

"As for that, Fanny, I'll give you one too, if you like," says the old miser, slowly. She is so elated by the thought that one of her nieces is going to make so distinguished a marriage, that not only her heart-strings but her purse-strings are expanded.

"What?" says Mrs. Adare. "Aunt Bridget! Let me fall upon your neck. You really mean it? A prayer shall be said for you night and morning for a month."

"My own prayers are sufficient for me," says Miss Bridget, austere, who is of the Low-Church party, and scents ritualism in Fanny's words. "You can order the dress at your own woman's, Fanny; but it must not be too expensive, mind."

"Oh, I'll mind," says Fanny, who is already wondering what is the most expensive material now in fashion. "And now for Terry," says she. "What shall it be, Terry? White, of course. But——"

"You can arrange it," says the girl, drearily. She flings herself into a chair as if nothing any

longer is of any consequence to her, and gazes fixedly out of the window.

"You give us *carte blanche*, then?" says Fanny, enchanted at having got her consent at all. "Perhaps you are wise. Aunt Bridget and I will manage it. We'll make you a Queen of Beauty.—Going now, Aunt Bridget? Well, good-by. You will be sure to come to the rector's lecture to-night?"

Aunt Bridget, having said "Yes" to this, disappears, whereupon Mrs. Adare goes up to Terry.

"You lucky girl!" cries she.

"I don't feel at all lucky," says Terry, disconsolately. "I don't want to marry any one."

"Bless me! I wasn't thinking of Gerrard. I was thinking of that terrible old woman who has just left us. To marry Gerrard is a triumph, of course, but to be able to get a gown out of Aunt Bridget puts everything else into the shade. Good gracious! it lifts you to the heights of genius."

"You must be a genius too," says Terry, resentfully. "She is giving you a dress as well."

"Ah! but that was basely come by, in comparison!"

"And yet you pretended to be grateful to her."

"My dear child, I am grateful. A gown is a gown always."

"But to say you would pray for her!"

"Well, doesn't she want prayers, and are we not ordered to pray for all 'Turks?'" asks Mrs. Adare, giving way to a burst of frivolous if irresistible laughter.

"You are too bad, Fanny," says Terry, who is laughing in spite of herself. Suddenly, however, as though struck by a thought, her laughter dies away. Her eyes are on the window. "Fanny! here he is! he is coming! Fanny, will you stay with me?"

"Not likely," says Fanny, picking up her gloves and flying to the door.

"But what shall I say to him?" wringing her hands in her distress.

"Say 'Yes!'" cries Fanny, with a little malicious grin, as she runs out of the door-way and down the back-stairs to the garden, so as to escape him.

## CHAPTER V.

Fancy paints with hues unreal  
Smile of bliss and sorrow's mood :  
If they both are but ideal,  
They reject the seeming good.

“WELL?” says Trefusis. He has come forward to meet Terry, as the latter, with all the air of a first-class misdemeanant on the way to execution, comes into the drawing-room,—the poor old drawing-room that surely never has seemed so shabby as it does to-day. He is a tall man of about twenty-eight, with a slight but powerful figure and rather large hands and feet. There is something powerful about the lean face, too,—something rather too masterful, perhaps, especially about the lower jaw. His eyes are a very dark gray, and his hair is cropped as close to his head as any woman could desire. Strictly speaking, he could never be considered handsome,—not half so good-looking, for example, as Laurence O'More, who might pose at any moment as a young Apollo. His mouth is too severe, his nose too straight, his eyes too searching; but, in spite of all these defects, Gerrard Trefusis is a man not lightly to be loved or hated.

He has come across the room to meet her, but he has not even attempted to take her hand. He had

told himself that he would leave it to her entirely. That silence of hers last night, that half-acceptance, —or was it a half-refusal?—had stirred him. He would not coerce her by soft words or tender actions. That she does not love him now he knows, but in time she may learn to love him. It seems to him, however, that it would be dishonorable to entice her into an engagement which she might afterwards learn to regret. Let her make her own choice, free and unfettered. Perhaps there is some pride mixed up with this Spartan resolve.

Unfortunately, Terry somewhat spoils the magnanimity of his resolution by holding out her hand to him, courtesy compelling her to the act. He takes it, and holds it closely enough, but with nothing beyond that to show the girl the depth of the love that burns within his heart.

“How d’ye do?” says Terry, shaking his hand nervously, almost warmly. She is feeling frightened to death. How tall he looks! how stern! She tries to meet him as an every-day acquaintance; she pushes a chair towards him; she even attempts to give him her usual smile reserved for visitors; but this is a distinct failure.

“I told you I should come,” says Trefusis, ignoring the smile and the chair alike. He feels as if he could not sit down until this is settled.

“Yes, I know,” says Terry, giving up the society air and sinking into deep depression. “I told you, too—that I—you remember?—that I——”

"That you did not love me?" says Trefusis, in a perfectly matter-of-fact tone. There is such an utter dearth of emotion in it that Terry's nervousness disappears as if by magic. It seems to brace her to the task before her. If he doesn't really care——

"It is not a thing to forget," says Trefusis. "But you told me also that you loved no one else."

"That is quite as true," says she, coldly. His calmness has nettled her almost beyond bearing. "I love no one but the boys and Fanny."

"I do not fear them," says Trefusis.

"No?" His confident tone annoys her. If he could only know how far above her bare toleration of him these dear ones count, he might speak less certainly. Yet perhaps that is why he does so speak, she tells herself with a sigh, because he knows that for their sakes—the boys' sakes—she is going to say "Yes."

"All that is nothing," says Trefusis, suddenly. There had been a little pause. "We went through that last night. The answer I want to-day has to do with one question only. Will you marry me?"

Was there ever so bald, so unlover-like a proposal? Terry stands silent. A whole minute goes by. In that minute she tells herself that he does not love her; and yet, if not, why does he want to marry her? It is a riddle insoluble. She draws a sharp quick breath. Then——

"Yes," she says, bravely. Her face is as white as death,—so white that it checks the words on

Trefusis's lips and kills the growing gladness in his eyes.

"You would rather say 'No'?" says he, very quietly, but distinctly.

Terry throws up her head. Her large eyes flash defiance into his.

"I have said 'Yes,'" says she. "Would you prefer that I should say 'No'?"

Trefusis smiles. It is a pity she does not see the smile, there is so much strange sweetness in it. But the girl's eyes are bent upon the ground. They are heavy with tears, tears she would not have let him see for a king's ransom.

"You cannot so misjudge me," says Trefusis, gently. "I am glad indeed that you have said 'Yes.' My only regret is that you cannot say it more willingly. But I hope—time will help me."

He lifts her hand and presses it to his lips. To her it seems such a foolish formal act, yet she is thankful too that he desires no more of her than this slight caress upon her hand. She makes no objection to that; her little hand lies limp and unsympathetic within his.

"As to that," says she, his last words ringing in her ears, "you must let me say something. It"—lifting shy uncertain eyes to his—"it is quite true that I care for no one—in that way. But time, that you speak of, may *not* make me care for you—in——"

"That way," Trefusis repeats. "Yes, I know. I understand ; and I take the risk."

"There is something more," says Terry, wretchedly. Will nothing touch him, hurt him, offend him? Has he no pride? Will nothing send him away?

"I want to be quite fair with you. I want to tell you—I"—miserably and in a most ashamed little way that is full of sweetness—"must tell you that I am marrying you only because I think it will be so good for—for——"

"The boys?" says Trefusis, slowly, seeing she cannot go on. "Yes, I know even that. Fanny, without knowing it, let me see it. Well, I will be good to the boys. Is that all? Is there any other thing that must yet be told?"

Terry turns suddenly upon him, a passion of anger, of despair, within her heart.

"There is!" cries she. "Why do you want to marry me? How could any one want to marry a girl who does not love him,—who thinks only of her own people,—who——"

"You spoke of riddles just now," says he, interrupting her unceremoniously. "This is mine. You can give any answer to it that you like. I shall only say that, in spite of all your reasons to the contrary, I still want to marry you."

"Well, I have told you," says she, slowly, heavily.

"You have, indeed."



A silence follows upon this. He breaks it.

"Perhaps you thought your honesty would induce me to withdraw from my proposal," says he, in a curious tone; "but, if so, you were mistaken. It has only waked in me a stronger desire for you. I like honesty."

"Sometimes honesty sounds like rudeness," says Terry, coldly. She has given up all hope of being able to get rid of this good match that has been thrust upon her. "I hope you exonerate me from that; actual rudeness, I mean."

"I am not a fault-finder," says Trefusis. "Is that how you regard me? I am sure, at all events, I shall never find a fault in you."

Later on these words of his trouble her mind, and she threshes them through and through. Was there a threat conveyed in them? a threat that he would be on the lookout for faults? or was it a flattering declaration that as yet he had seen no fault in her?

He rises to go.

"Shall I see you at the rector's lecture to-night?" he asks. His voice is that of a mere ordinary acquaintance.

"Yes, I think so. Fanny is going, I know. And the boys want to go."

"Ah! the boys! If it is for the good of the boys, of course you will go. And"—he hesitates to watch her face—"and so of course shall I."

"I hope you will never make yourself uncomfortable because of the boys," says she, hurriedly, anx-

iously. "That is not necessary, really; and, besides——"

"Besides," says he, interrupting her again, "I am bound to go; I've promised the rector to sing for him in between the pauses of his lecture. Nature most unkindly has given me a sort of a voice, and you see what a martyr it makes of me. You will be there too—with the boys?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"You don't want to go?" says he, suddenly.

"Not very much." She glances at him for a second, then her eyes fall.

"Is your cousin, Mr. O'More, to be there to-night?"

"I am not sure; he has been at Ballybrack all day. He may be home in time. But why?"

"A mere matter of curiosity," says Trefusis, in a queer tone. He goes suddenly to her and takes her hands and clasps them hard.

"You have said that you love no one but the boys," says he. "Will you swear that?"

Terry shakes herself free of him passionately.

"I never swear," says she. "I have told you: believe me or not, as you will."

She looks beautiful as she stands back from him, her head on high, her large eyes burning with angry fire. Trefusis, staring at her, reads truth in those angry depths.

"I do believe you," says he; yet he leaves her without another word, a touch of her hand, a glance.

## CHAPTER VI.

He came unlooked for, undesired.

THE school-room, a bare, desolate sort of room on week-days, is looking quite festive to-night. It is arrayed in a glory unprecedented: the decorations hitherto have been confined to a few decorous boughs of evergreens carefully placed here and there where the damp patches on the wall are most conspicuous, but this evening the room seems ablaze with color. There is something, indeed, positively bacchanalian about the hitherto modest old school-room.

All the candles, arranged in sconces against the bare whitewashed walls, have been dressed *à la ballet*. Frivolous little skirts of pink and yellow tissue-paper have been hung on little frames around them, —regretfully short little skirts, too, sticking out in a disgracefully flaunting fashion, and making the candles look like danseuses with only one white leg instead of two.

As for the oil lamps, they put the candles completely in the shade, being redder, skirtier, even more ballet-ish. As yet gas has not found its way to this small town, and electric light, if they had even heard of it, would have been regarded by the shopkeepers and small farmers as a device of the devil to allure

their souls to perdition. "Perdition" the place is always called in Ballymore, the shorter word being considered rude.

A little stage—they would have died, however, if you had called it that: they are very Low-Church in Ballymore,—a little erection, let us therefore say, has been made at the end of the room, and this is covered with a thin scarlet substance that looks admirable from a distance, but which has an unfortunate trick of catching up the unwary one and following after the train of the lady's gown that moves over it. "Turkey red" is what the shopkeeper called it when he sold it this morning to Miss Gabbett, the rector's sister. It has a queer smell, and it feels damp.

Wreaths of ivy and laurel droop from every possible corner and are hanging from every beam. A particularly splendid wreath of roses is suspended from the central lamp. This is evidently meant to be the *chef-d'œuvre* of the evening; but, unfortunately, the roses have succumbed to the heat, and their leaves are hanging dead.

When Terry enters, accompanied by the boys, the room is quite full, and the foreign missionary who is staying with the rector, and who has offered to enlighten the inhabitants of Ballymore about the present state of Jerusalem, is already on the platform. The rector has borrowed a magic-lantern from a clerical friend in the next parish (who has some slides supposed to represent streets and scenes

of the ancient city), and is now going over the lantern and examining the slides, oblivious of the fact that his sister, a tart old maid of about sixty, is beckoning to him to come and arrange seats for the Hall party, who have just arrived.

They had come only a moment before Terry and her brothers. Terry had purposely held back from entering until Fanny, accompanied by Trefusis and followed by at least a dozen people, had gone in first. This had annoyed the boys, who were eager for the lantern, and who would indeed, if their wishes had been granted, have been seated before the lamps were lit. Now, to their disgust, Terry elects to sit on a bench just behind Miss Gabbett (their pet aversion, at whose hands they have suffered much), in quite a dark corner, a place that barely divides the sheep from the goats,—that is, the townspeople from their betters.

“Can’t you move on, Terry?” asks Geoffrey, in an angry whisper. “What do you want to sit behind this old cat for?”

Providentially, Miss Gabbett is deaf.

“No, no. Stay here. It is a very good place, and we can see so well.” She seats herself resolutely; she is glad of the dark, of the quiet; she dreads the thought of going into the fuller light, with the fresh new terrible change in her life still tormenting her. She has not even told the boys about it. Some undefined feeling has kept her tongue silent. She did not say to herself that the boys were very fond of

Larry, but she thought of it all the same. And do they like Mr. Trefusis? They have had hardly an opportunity to like or dislike; she has therefore been actually afraid to say a word to them about it, especially as they have been in a rather truculent mood all day. It was something about Miss Gabbett. At dinner, she remembers now, they had said something to her disparagement. She had been scolding them when they were at the rectory for their lessons. She had evidently been at her worst with them, and that would be very bad indeed. Miss Gabbett's tongue is a sword. And the boys are always at war with her.

"Be quiet, Geoff. Mr. Dormer is going to begin." Mr. Dormer is the foreign missionary.

"Well, I hate being here," says Max, rebelliously, his beautiful face growing dark.

"You have come," says a voice behind Terry. She starts violently. She has not once looked towards Fanny's party, or she would have seen that Trefusis rose at once on her entrance and came towards her.

"Fanny wants to know if you won't come over and sit with her."

"No. Tell her no," says Terry, hurriedly. "I would rather sit here. I"—with an anxious little laugh—"I should be afraid to cross the room before all those eyes."

"I suppose you could not give me a seat here?" says Trefusis. At this both the boys, whose ears are wide open, rise simultaneously to their feet.

"Sit down," says Terry, turning to them indignantly. Hateful boys! She feels as if she could willingly box their ears: yet only yesterday she would have felt nothing but a sisterly admiration for their excellent good manners. Not that manners have much to do with it in this case; a desire to escape from the proximity of Miss Gabbett has given a stimulus to the boys' courtesy. Besides, to be near Fanny; Fanny is such fun! Poor boys! they are doomed to disappointment.

"You must not be offended," says Terry, deliberately, looking with a fair show of courage into Trefusis's face, "but I hope you will go away. I could not bear—— Oh, *do* go! They will all be talking, and asking me questions. I—it is dreadful!" she says, turning very pale.

Her courage breaks down here, her voice trembles.

"I am going," he replies, calmly. He rather admires this shrinking from publicity, from observation, so sure to follow on her engagement to him. "I would go away altogether," says he, rising and preparing to return to Mrs. Adare, "but that I have promised Mr. Gabbett to sing something for him during the pauses in the lecture."

"You sing?" says Terry, with some amazement. She has forgotten that he told her before. She has seen him so often, but had never thought of him as one who could sing.

"Occasionally," smiling: then suddenly he looks

back at her ; he has taken a step or two away. "I shall sing to you," he says, gravely.

By this time the lecture has commenced and the rector is showing off his slides. The lights have been lowered, and, except for the ballet-dancers planted along the walls, all is gloom. Jerusalem, in little spasmodic jerks, is being shown to a breathless audience.

Jerusalem as here described must be a truly remarkable place. No wonder so many people nowadays make pilgrimages to it.

The lecturer has grown a little hoarse over Bethany and Nazareth, and is now working himself into a fever over a full-blown view of the Holy City. The coloring is immense. The clouds are indigo of the deepest dye. The walls are red as blood ; most of the houses are of the tint of yellow ochre, and the rest are a pale and sickly pink. The prevailing color through all the slides, however, is vermilion, and the more vermilion the greater the success, to judge by the shouts of the village children in the rear.

Mr. Dormer is prosing along in the orthodox style. He is a tall, sad-visaged man, dull from life's fight with the Jews, and evidently without a joke left in him, if ever he knew the meaning of one. Not that it matters ; no one is listening to him ; the slides have all the attention that can be spared from a round of low-voiced gossip. Here in the dark, where no one can be seen, it is found delightfully



easy to whisper little bits of scandal into one's neighbors' ears.

Once great applause breaks forth: this is when the rector, to whom the lantern is somewhat of a Chinese puzzle, puts in one of the slides upside down. This shows a camel with its four legs in the air, and some specimens of the human form that look dismembered. It is a great success; every one grows hysterical. Old Mr. Martin, the butcher, standing up in the corner, asks, excitedly, "What's thim wild animals there?" and is very angry when the mistake is explained to him. Mrs. Adare is in convulsions; and as for the two O'More boys, there is "no houldin' thim," as their old nurse would have said.

Miss Gabbett looks back indignantly.

"Geoffrey, cease that noise!" says she, in a loud whisper.

"Every one is laughing as well as me," returns Geoffrey, angrily.

"Silence, sir, whilst your superiors are speaking!" says Miss Gabbett, alluding to the good rector, who is now explaining his mistake.

"It is you who are speaking," says Geoffrey, raging; and there threatens to be a prolonged scuffle between him and Miss Gabbett, when Terry comes to the rescue.

"Be quiet, Geoffrey," says she, whereon Geoffrey stops speaking, and broods on vengeance.

"Ladies and gentlemen," says the rector, good-

humoredly, "the camel, in the last picture I had the pleasure of showing you, had evidently proved refractory. It must have upset its riders. It was a thoroughly realistic representation. I hope you will take it as such."

Here all the old ladies prick up their ears and begin to whisper. "Realistic!" Is that word orthodox! Is it High-Church? Did he mean ritualistic? The rector has been secretly accused lately of a leaning towards flowers and decorations. And perhaps the society of a man fresh from "India's coral strand" and Ceylon's spicy isle (they all call it Cee-lone when they sing that hymn, and many of them think the "ile" is "Macassar") would be very likely to upset his views still further. Missionaries are hardly respectable sometimes. Living so much among savages is so deteriorating!

The lecture is once more in full swing. The lights are a little lower than before, and the vengeance in Geoffrey's breast is growing stronger. Unfortunately, the means to gratify it are in his grasp. Some misguided person had given him an orange on his way through the village, and this he now presses into the service. Under cover of the darkness he leans forward, and by the aid of a long piece of cord fastens it securely to one of the ribbons hanging at the back of his enemy's cap.

Terry, happening to glance in his direction, sees him leaning forward suspiciously close to the old lady's back. A sudden misgiving seizes her: she

knows Geoffrey and his capabilities. What is he doing? A thrill of fear shoots through her: she too leans forward. Almost her hand is on his, when, looking up, he sees her intention, and sees, too, the coming destruction of his hopes. Quick as lightning he draws back, lifts his arm, and sends the orange shooting into space.

Into space goes Miss Gabbett's cap with it. There is a wild if smothered skirl on her part; up go her two hands to her bald head. There is one awful moment. Even slides have ceased to attract. Miss Gabbett's head carries all before it. Then Terry, sheltered by the providential gloom, dashes forward, picks up the cap, and tremblingly pushes it down once more upon Miss Gabbett's head, then sinks half fainting on her seat.

The lecturer has seen nothing: he has gone on with his prosing. Miss Gabbett is muttering and snorting with wrath.

"Go home, Geoffrey," says poor Terry, in a low but terrible voice; and Geoffrey, disgraced but unrepentant, moves down three yards or so on the empty bench and there sits out the remainder of the performance. Terry pretends not to see him.

And now the first half of the lecture is at an end. Trefusis, rising, goes up the steps to the little platform, and Mrs. Connor, a friend of Fanny's, who has offered to accompany him, strikes the first chords of his song.

## CHAPTER VII.

**Ah! were she pitiful as she is fair!**

O yes! O yes! O yes!  
Here is a pretty mess!  
A maiden's heart is gone,  
And she is left forlorn!

HIS singing is a revelation to Terry. Passionately susceptible to the delights of music, her whole soul seems to thrill within her as his rich voice resounds through the room, filling it with melody. The tender waves rise and fall; the words come to her distinctly; not one of them is lost. He had said he would sing to *her*; and what is it he is singing?

Oh, touch that rose-bud, it will bloom,  
My lady fair,  
A passionate red in dim green gloom,  
A joy, a splendor, a perfume,  
That sleeps in air.

You touched my heart, it gave a thrill,  
Just like a rose  
That opens at a lady's will;  
Its bloom is always yours until  
You bid it close.

Mortimer Collins's charming verses, set to some charming sounds! But the sounds are even more, to this girl whose heart is not awake, than the words.

She is entranced. She leans forward, watching him, listening, delighted. She had not known he could sing like that. She has forgotten everything, the people, her dread of their observation, even Larry, —Larry, who is standing, his back against the side of the small platform, glowering at her.

"You touched my heart." The girl, looking at Trefusis, finds his eyes fixed earnestly on her. This gives her a little shock, but the power of his singing is so great that she does not draw back from that deep gaze, and even when it is over she still looks at him and smiles faintly. It is the vaguest smile, born altogether of her joy in his singing, not at all of her joy in him, and Trefusis is strong enough to acknowledge this to himself and keep away from her. Yet because of that smile there is high hope in his heart as he goes back to his seat.

Ah me! ah me! what frugal cheer |  
My love doth feed upon!

Miss Anson pushes her skirts aside and greets him as he returns to where she sits. She is a tall girl, very handsome, with fine shoulders, and a fine nose too, remarkably Roman. She had heard a little of the new engagement during the day, but had chosen to disregard it as *un fait accompli*. She had indeed desired to engage herself to him, and was therefore unwilling to believe that that little ill-dressed girl Miss

O'More had spoiled her chance. But she had watched him as he sang, and, being by no means a fool, had understood the look he had bent on Terry. To make assurance doubly sure, however, she had, during the pause after the first verse, asked Fanny more directly about it, and received a full account at once.

"I must congratulate you," says she now, when Trefusis has seated himself beside her, his heart full of Terry and that last strange smile she had given him.

"You have heard?" says Trefusis, pleasantly.

"Yes, you may congratulate me, indeed."

"Well, I have done it." She pauses and looks at him. "She is very clever," says Miss Anson.

Something in her tone nettles him.

"What do you mean by that?" he asks, quickly.

"That"—sweetly—"she is very clever."

"'Very charming' would describe her better."

"You think," lifting her brows, "that she isn't clever, then?"

"No. Certainly not. What I think is, that she is both."

"Ah! Perhaps so," with a shrug of her shapely shoulders,—such beautiful shoulders, and so exquisitely white and rounded,—a trifle too rounded, perhaps, too matured, but very handsome for all that; and she is so perfectly dressed too. His eyes turn quickly to where Terry sits, in her dark plain little frock, with her slender figure, her high-bred

air. How impossible to compare them ! “ Perhaps so,” says Miss Anson, smiling doubtfully. “ But certainly she is clever.”

“ You mean something,” says Trefusis.

“ Well, since you will have it,” laughing, “ I think you will find that the girl who, without a penny, captures the man with many pennies, will always be called by the world—clever.”

“ She has not captured me, in the sense you mean,” says Trefusis, warmly.

“ No ?” She laughs again. “ You have captured her, then ?”

“ I object to the word altogether,” says Trefusis, who has now regained his usual cool manner. “ It does away with freedom,—the freedom of choice.”

“ Ah ! Freedom !” Miss Anson twirls her fan meaningly. “ Is she free ?”

“ Free ?” What does she mean ? Trefusis regards her curiously : what strange suggestion would she make ? He knows Terry is not in love with him, but he has her word for it that she loves no other man.

“ Oh, don’t look so horrified,” says Miss Anson, in a delightfully amused tone. She has been studying his face, and has perhaps drawn some amusement out of it, though of a rather bitter description. “ I know nothing of a rival : I was only wondering—very stupidly, no doubt—whether any girl could be free, circumstanced as she is : free to choose, I mean. A girl so poor, is she not always bound and fettered,

compelled, as it were, to accept any chance that Heaven—or the other place—may send her?"

"You misjudge her. Miss O'More would be a difficult person to compel," says Trefusis, coldly. "And," with a still colder smile, "you are not very flattering to me."

"Oh, you! It is good for you! You have had too much flattery all your days!" says Miss Anson, with a quick little glance that has coquetry in it. Unfortunately, the magic-lantern being once more required, the lights are at this moment abruptly lowered, so that the glance is unseen. There are few things ruder than a magic-lantern entertainment. The lecture is again in full swing. More hectic grow the lights of Jerusalem. Standing out, as they do, from the surrounding gloom, they positively glow.

Max O'More, much pleased with their florid effects, looks around for Geoffrey, and, perceiving that in his disgraced corner he can see but little of the joys spread out for the parish, even though he should crane his long young neck to the uttermost, is filled with pity and quick rage. Poor old Geoff! After all, what had he done? Only given that old cat her deserts. Well, if Geoffrey is to be punished for nothing, he will be punished too. A fond but unfortunate desire to share Geoffrey's trouble leads him to regard with a thoughtful eye the huge board on which is written in big letters the programme for the evening:



Lecture by the REV. H. DORMER, M.A.

Magic-Lantern . . . . . { REV. CANON GAB-  
BETT.

SONG.

"Oh, touch that rose-bud!" . . . . . MR. TREFUSIS.

and so on, until it comes to

DUET.

"What are the wild waves saying?" . { MRS. BARRY and  
MRS. DORMER.

Alas! when Max's eyes come to this, they stay there. They dwell upon it; in the darkness a broad smile widens on his youthful lips; in the darkness he creeps towards that programme. There is a little scrape-scape to be heard,—nothing more; and now Max creeps back to his seat by Terry, who has not noticed his going or coming.

Mrs. Dormer, the wife of the missionary,—a tall, gaunt female, who looks as if she ought to have a moustache and whiskers,—had kindly consented to delight the people of Ballymore with a duet, in which, according to the programme, she had been promised assistance by Mrs. Barry, a stout elderly person of sixty, who once, in the dark ages, sang at a concert in Dublin, and has ever since insisted on singing at every concert in this her native town. In fact, it would not be a safe thing to give a concert here without asking Mrs. Barry to "contribute" something.

She is now "contributing." The lecture has ceased again for the time being. Once again the lights burn gayly. The duet has commenced. Mrs. Dormer, evidently bursting with a desire to know what the "wild waves" are saying, is singing with all her might. Mrs. Barry is trembling with impatience to begin her part. All is going well enough, when suddenly an electric shock runs through the assembly. Some one has chanced to look at the big programme,—and after that——!

A ripple runs through the room,—a ripple of laughter. The "waves" are sounding loudly on the "small erection," but the ripple rushes through the seats below.

All eyes are now directed towards the programme. What has happened to it?

Terry, following the eyes of the others, knows, alas, only too well what has happened. Her heart sinks within her. There, where "waves" was once written, the word now is "wives"! Somebody has scratched out the *a* and put in an *i*. Somebody! How well she knows the somebody!

As the programme reads now, it is

"What are the wild *wives* saying?"

What, indeed? The poor "wild wives" know nothing of all this. They are still pounding away at the duet, shouting at the top of their lungs. Mrs. Barry, just now, is addressing Mrs. Dormer as her

brother, a slight aberration of the intellect, no doubt, and to be excused, as Mrs. Dormer in a coat and trousers would not be amiss. Gayly they sing.

Miss Gabbett has risen ; she is beckoning furiously to her brother. Now the rector, recovering from the trance of horror into which he has fallen, has come quickly to the front. Involuntarily his eyes seek those of Max O'More, and, seeing him the only unsmiling one among the audience, he knows him at once as the culprit. In a second the rector has sprung towards the insulting programme, has torn it down, and placed it with its face to the wall.

Thus a tragedy is averted.

And now the duet is drawing to a close. The final shrieks are reached. The "Yes, yes, yeses" and the "No, no, noes" are over. Mrs. Barry has cracked most successfully on the last high note, and all is peace.

## CHAPTER VIII.

One face alone, one face alone,  
These eyes require ;  
But when that longed-for sight is shown,  
What fatal fire  
Shoots through my veins a keen and liquid flame ?

TO-DAY has come, has grown, and has broadened to high noon. The air is mildness itself. No wind has arisen to stir the gentle shrubberies, yet there have been storms at More House terrible enough to almost shake it to its foundations.

First came the rector. He was dreadfully angry over Miss Gabbett's cap. The "wild wives," he said (though it, too, was a most disgraceful episode) he could pass over in sorrowful silence, but an insult to an old lady—and so on. Terry had dissolved into tears. She had implored the rector to forgive Geoffrey. She had spoken to him, spoken severely, she said, and he had promised her faithfully never to do it again.

"He won't have the opportunity," replied the rector, grimly. "She has spent her whole morning cutting off those streamers behind, and making them into big bows in the front of her cap. But it is a great grief to her to have to do it," said he, sighing (Miss Gabbett has led his gentle soul a truly awful

life for the last forty-five years, but as yet he has not quite discovered the fact). "She—she was very proud of those streamers," said he.

Eventually Terry made friends with him again, and even induced him to say a forgiving word to Geoffrey, who came sulkily enough into the room at first, but who, at the first kind word the rector said, astounded them all by suddenly flinging himself into his arms and clinging to him, sobbing as if his heart would break. In direct ratio to his hatred for Miss Gabbett is his love for her brother. He was a curious mixture of good and evil, that boy.

It is now four o'clock. The rector has gone. Geoffrey has been consoled by Terry with loving words and kisses, and comforted with hot sponge-cake straight out of the oven, and Terry is beginning once more to breathe freely, when a second avalanche descends upon her.

It is Larry this time,—Larry, pale, furious, in a flaming passion. He strides up to her across the little garden she calls her own, behind those banks where the violets grow, and, catching both her arms, holds her as in a vice.

"Is it true," he demands, in a choking voice, "that you have promised to marry that English fellow?"

"Yes, it is true,—quite true," says Terry, in low but heart-broken tones.

"What a voice!" says Larry, still holding her, still glaring at her. "You aren't in love with him,

then? I defy you to say you are in love with him. Come! Are you?"

"I'm not," says Terry. Furtively (he has let go one of her hands) she wipes her eyes.

"Then you are marrying him for his money?" with strong disgust. "You"—contemptuously—"ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"I am," says poor Terry, meekly.

"Pshaw!" says Laurence. "Enough of this nonsense. Come into the drawing-room and write a line to him at once. Break it off with him."

"I can't. I can't, indeed. I couldn't," nervously. "And, besides, I ought not. Both Fanny and Aunt Bridget say it is my positive duty to marry him. They say Providence has thrown him in my path (I wish," sadly, "it hadn't!), and that on account of the boys I——"

"I'll tell you what's your duty," says Laurence, vehemently. "It is to marry me!"

"Nonsense, Larry! When we haven't a penny between us! And, besides," with a sigh and with much more candor than tact, it must be confessed, "you are not at all the sort of person I should like to marry!"

"Nonsense yourself!" says her cousin, not in the least overcome by this rather point-blank declaration. "You would be as happy as the day is long if you were once my wife."

"No, no! we should do nothing but quarrel from morning till night," says Terry, shaking her head.

"You know, Larry, we are never together for five minutes without having a skirmish of some sort."

"That's because I love you," says Larry, with conviction. "There isn't another girl in Ballymore I'd be bothered quarrelling with. Is there, now?"

"Still, you know, to spend one's life quarrelling——"

"You know it wouldn't be like that, Terry. As if I wasn't your slave! Give up this fellow Trefusis, and listen to me."

"The fact is," says Terry, her eyes on the ground, "I don't want to marry any one."

"The fact is," his anger rising again, "you want to be a rich woman. Girls are all alike. I thought you would be above that sort of thing; but there isn't one of you who wouldn't give her soul for a diamond ring."

"Don't be a fool," says Miss O'More, tenderly.

"You won't give him up, then?"

"There are the boys,—their futures," says poor Terry, sore distressed.

"Rubbish! I never heard a word about the boys' futures till this fellow appeared. Well, go your own way." He turns towards the gate, but she runs after him.

"Larry, don't go like that; I have no one to talk to, to consult with, but you."

"You have Trefusis now."

"Oh, no. Of course I could not speak to him as I do to you."

"'Pon my word," indignantly, "I wish he could hear you."

"Well, he can't, anyway. And, Larry, what's the good of fighting with me about this?"

"Oh, as for that, you know I couldn't fight with you. I'd kill myself the day I couldn't see you."

He loosens her hold on his arm rather roughly, and stalks away.

Away through the woods that lead to the Hall. He is bent on seeing Fanny, on giving her a piece of his mind first, then remonstrating with her, then going on his knees to her to stop this hateful marriage.

Half-way through the wood he finds himself face to face with Trefusis.

"How d'ye do?" says Trefusis, in the ordinary tone. Being an Englishman, of course he does not go beyond this formula; he waits for the other to speak.

"I've been down at More House," says Larry, whose whole frame is on fire.

"Yes?"

The deliberate calmness of Trefusis infuriates the other.

"Yes. And she has told me of her engagement to you." His face grows very white. "Of her engagement to *you*!"

His breath seems to fail him a little. He looks at Trefusis.

"You think she is in love with you," says Larry.



"No," replies Trefusis, plainly. "Your cousin has herself told me that she is not in love with me." His voice is clear, calm, and distinct, yet in spite of his strong effort it is impossible to keep out the bitterness that lies in it. "She told me something else, too," says he, gazing straight at Laurence: "that she loved no one else."

Laurence winces.

"She told you the truth then, as she surely would," says he, loyal to his love when he would most joyfully have lied, and turns on his heel and leaves him.

Trefusis, in no pleasant frame of mind, keeps on his way to More House. Hearing that Terry is outside, he goes in search of her, his whole mental bearing towards her a little transversed.

Why had her cousin made that sudden attack on him, unless—unless——! He pushes this suspicion from him as unworthy of her, but still with his mind a little inflamed against her. He turns the corner and goes straight to where Mrs. Ryan told him she would be, in her own little garden where Laurence had left her.

She is standing beside a tiny flower-bed, with a spade in her hand, digging vigorously. Her attitude, her evident unconcern, her plain disregard of the stories that are flying around her, fill Trefusis's almost too full heart with anger,—a very calm, self-contained anger, certainly, very different from Larry's, but none the less intense for all that.

She looks up at him as he draws nearer. Her face is as beautiful as usual, perhaps even more beautiful, but it is flushed, tired !

*Tired !* Trefusis would have refused to acknowledge his anger of a moment ago, but here is surely just cause for anger. Why should she be slaving, working until her face is red, her hands spoiled,—she, who has promised to be his wife? Surely such an occupation is not necessary, is not worthy of her. In the world in which he has lived, so rich, so calm, so prosperous, among the women with whom up to the present his lot has been cast there has never been one who dug her garden and hoed it with her own hands. The touch of priggishness in his character comes to the front now.

“I am afraid you will spoil your hands,” says he, with admirable self-control, with undiminished calm, indeed, though inwardly his heart is on fire. It is his salutation to her, and the girl resents it. As a fact, she is not very safe to approach just now, except with extreme tenderness. Last night’s worries with the boys, and to-day’s troubles with the rector and Larry, have somewhat overstrung her nerves.

She looks at him, standing there in her serge gown and pale-blue blouse, with her hands grasping the spade, and her face as beautiful as Heaven has made it. And, looking at him, something of his thoughts grows clear to her, though not all, and wrath takes hold of her. To greet her thus, without a gentle word !

It is a very quiet wrath, however.

"It is either my garden or my hands that must be spoiled," says she, "and I like my garden the best."

There is a note of defiance in her air. As she speaks, she lets the spade fall and holds up to him her hands. There is defiance too in this gesture. The hands beyond doubt are a little soiled by the contact of the brown earth beneath. Her answer seems to annoy Trefusis.

"I think it would be better to like one's hands," says he, coldly but courteously: "they are of so much more use to one in society."

"That is true," says Terry, tranquilly. "One cannot take one's garden into the drawing-room; one *must* take one's hands there. Still, one can stay out of the drawing-room."

"I think not," says Trefusis, who no doubt has cause for much displeasure, but who, unhappily, does not know how to cope with this present trouble. He looks back at her unflinchingly. "At least as my wife you cannot."

"Oh, your wife!" says she. She stops as if choking. "You should think—think, before it goes too far. I am what I am: nothing can change me. You are angry with me now. No, don't speak: I know you are angry. You think I ought not to be digging here. Your mother never digged in her garden, or your sisters, or your aunts——"

"I have no sisters, and no mother," says Trefusis, in a distant tone.

"No? Well," with a short little laugh, "even if you had, they would not be guilty of such unlady-like work as this: I feel sure of that. But I—I glory in it. I like it. I'm sorry if you are angry, but I do like to dig. I know I shall always go on digging. It is better for you to know this at once. In case you might——"

He interrupts her.

"So far as I am concerned, you may go on digging forever," says he, haughtily. "As it is such a favorite amusement of yours, I shall see that there is a place set apart for you in our future home in which you can dig and delve to your heart's content."

This he says quite easily in spite of his coldness,—with an ease, indeed, that enrages her.

"You mean, I suppose, that whatever I do must be a matter of indifference to you."

"Certainly not. I wished rather to convey to you the idea that what was your pleasure should be mine also."

"You convey things very queerly," says Miss O'More. "I should have thought you meant the other thing."

"The other thing?" Trefusis lifts his brows rather superciliously as he asks this superfluous question. He would not confess it even to himself, but, as a fact, the usual imperturbability of his temper has been somewhat overthrown by his encounter with Larry.

"You know what I mean," says Terry, her brow

darkening, her soft eyes emitting a flash. "You object to my working in this way; you think I ought to be sitting on a lounge all day long, with my hands in my lap. If you really meant that you didn't object to my doing it, you would have said so."

"I thought," coldly, "that I had said so."

"You couldn't have thought that!" she cries, passionately; "you couldn't!" With a sudden impetuous movement most unexpected by him, she flings her spade at his feet, and, hurrying past him, goes towards the house.

Trefusis, unused to this kind of thing, looks after her thoughtfully. He does not attempt to follow her. When she is out of sight he stoops, picks up the spade, sticks it into the ground, turns methodically towards the garden gate, and so to the front of the house. It is the shortest way back to the Hall.

As he passes the balcony, however, a voice calls to him. Looking up, he sees Terry bending over.

"I am sorry I was so rude to you," says she, slowly, formally. Her face is a little flushed, her eyes proud, her whole air, it must be confessed, far removed from penitence of any sort. If there is regret in it, it is certainly of a very haughty kind. "I beg your pardon."

"Was there anything to beg my pardon about?" asks Trefusis, ungenerously. His entire manner, indeed, is so ungenerous that any inward promptings towards righteous dealing with him that might have

existed in Terry's heart are frozen on the spot. If he had only accepted her apology, indifferently though it was offered, some small bond might have risen between them ; but he is still smarting under a sense of injury, and the fact that she almost disdainfully refuses to let her eyes rest on his has driven him to the verge of discourtesy.

"You are right. I believe there was none," says she, taking her arms off the balcony and turning away.

"Terry !" says he, quickly, but too late. She waves her hand impatiently and goes into the house.

## CHAPTER IX.

Shadows we are: our triumph and our trouble

Pass like a dream, and we are passing too.

Life is a fancy, glory is a bubble.

- Shadows we are, and shadows we pursue.

THE cocks and the hens are in a high state of indignation: what does it all mean, this flying backward and forward through the yard? To Terry with meal in her pretty hands they are quite accustomed, but Terry playing hide-and-seek from the stable to the coach-house (where, in good times past, the coaches used to be), and from the cow-stall to the sheds, is a thing altogether out of their line. The pigeons, too, seem greatly upset by the proceedings beneath them, but they are up so high in their little homes over the stables that they can afford to look down upon the matter with a smiling contempt.

"Tip," shouts Geoffrey, having caught hold of Terry's skirt, but ineffectually, for she eludes him and escapes, though with a distinct rent in her gown.

It is a day that makes one wonder if heaven has anything more beautiful to show. The light is a pale shimmering gold, the air is delicious. All over the place the perfume of the swooning flowers comes to one: on the top of the old wall dark velvety wall-flowers are nodding their homely heads. Round

there in the orchard, just behind the yard, "the place is on fire with roses."

It is a week later,—a week that has troubled Tre-fusis a good deal. Every day he had gone down from the Hall to see Terry, and every day they had parted on exactly the same terms as they parted the day before. It seemed to him impossible to get nearer to the girl, to see into her heart, to touch the core of it. He could hold her hand; she had born that,—endured, he told himself, with extreme bitterness, was the word. Twice he had kissed her; she had said nothing, but she certainly had not kissed him.

At night he used to laugh at himself—there was little gayety in the laugh—and wonder why on earth he didn't make an end of it all, and break asunder a connection which redounded to nothing but his own discomfiture. Yet when the morning came and he started to see her once again, and yet more, when he did see her, he knew he should never be the one to sever his life from hers. And through it all a deadly jealousy troubled him,—jealousy of her cousin,—of Larry!

Every day he saw her at her home, and often in the evenings she dined at the Hall. Fanny would have had her come every evening, but Terry sometimes made excuses. Now and then, too, she lunched with Fanny, but he couldn't help knowing, from a word here and there, that it was less often than before he came on the scene.

After these luncheons he used to walk back with



her through the scented woods, and always he was conscious that he made no way with her.

She did not care! She was marrying him—she had told him that frankly that first day—for his money only. But she had told him, too, that her heart was free, and he had built a great structure upon that. It seemed now to be crumbling to ruin. Yet to give her up—No. Never! Never!

To-day he has come down as usual to pay her his morning visit,—a visit seldom accomplished without the boys' supervision. He has come a little earlier this morning, hoping to escape them, to have her quite to himself for five minutes. Half-way down the avenue the sound of voices, coming from the yard that lies on his right hand, reaches his ears. He pauses: is not that her laugh, that ringing silvery peal? After it comes a cry of "Caught! caught!" Surely Geoffrey's voice this time. Evidently there is no escaping the boys. What a pity Mr. Gabbett cannot give them their lessons in the morning rather than in the afternoon! The afternoons are always so full, and Terry is so seldom at home then. He turns towards the yard with a half-suppressed sigh.

Leading into it from one point is a low gate. To this Trefusis goes, and as he comes to it he stands still. There is an excellent view of the entire yard from this gate-way, as Trefusis acknowledges to himself a moment later rather grimly. He stops short at the entrance, and gazes on the picture before him.

Behind a huge water-barrel, Terry is standing, stooping low to avoid the eyes of her brothers, and beside her, stooping also, is Laurence O'More. Every now and then either of them peeps out from his or her side of the barrel, and as quickly draws back again, but not before Trefusis's angry glance can see that Terry's charming face is lit with laughter.

Evidently the game of hide-and-seek is now in full swing, but the boys are on the wrong scent; they are hunting about down below, behind the haystack, up in the lofts. Now they are down again, and are getting a little warmer. Terry's face glancing out from behind the barrel is growing full of excitement. She darts back behind her shelter, and Trefusis, from where he is standing, can see that she is whispering to her companion.

Meantime, the foe is drawing ever nearer, and, to add to the discomfiture of the two in hiding, a flock of soft white pigeons, coming swooping back to their homes in the yard, fresh from their petty larcenies committed in the cornfields around them, make straight for Terry. Are they not sure of their crumbs when she is near?

The boys being now in the stable, Terry has the courage to show herself, to raise her hands, to try and frighten away her feathered friends. In vain! Lower and lower they descend, their soft silvery wings gleaming in the sunlight.

Trefusis can see her rise in desperate stress, can see her uplifted arms, can almost hear her lips cry,

"Cush ! Cush !" though she says it in the softest whisper. He can see, too, that the pigeons think nothing of this, are not in the least afraid of their loving mistress. Bodily they descend upon her, perching on head and arms and dainty shoulders, cooing loudly the while.

And now the boys are out again. They see the pigeons. Where the pigeons are, there surely is Terry. A piercing war-whoop bursts from them. Terry springs to her feet and stands for a second laughing, her snowy betrayers still fluttering round her ; then she springs forward, Laurence after her, the boys in hot pursuit.

They so head her that she makes straight for the small gate where stands Justice,—that is, Trefusis. She is laughing as she runs ; her face is all alight, full of a beautiful, almost childish, excitement.

The fair full earth, the enraptured skies,  
She images in constant play :  
Night and the stars are in her eyes,  
But her sweet face is beaming day,  
A bounteous interblush of flowers,  
A dewy brilliance in a dale of bowers.

She has run almost into Trefusis's arms—into his presence, rather, for his arms are certainly at this moment not ready to receive her—before she sees him.

Then she stops short. The lovely light dies from her eyes, the laughter from her lips.

"You !" she says, faintly.

Trefusis says nothing. For the first time in his excellently well regulated life, he finds himself without words. That change in her face! The dying away of the mirth, the happy laughter! He had been angry because O'More was with her, but that hardly counts now. He can think of only one thing, that when she saw him her pretty face fell, her pretty smile died.

A very rage of anger against her surges in his heart.

"Oh! I didn't know," she cries, breathing quickly both from surprise and her late fast run, "that you were coming so early."

"So I perceive," says Trefusis, dryly.

Terry turns round as if to say something to Larry or the boys, but they are nowhere to be seen. Larry, scenting trouble in the air, has considerably carried her brothers away with him. Thus deserted, Terry once more looks at Trefusis.

"We were playing hide-and-seek," she says, nervously.

It is the unhappiest thing, but her nervousness only angers him still further. What has he done to her, that she should show actual distrust of him? What has there been in all his dealings with her to cause her to know fear, however slight, however transitory?

"I am sorry I was unfortunate enough to interrupt you," he says, calmly, without a trace in his voice of the emotion that is stirring him to his

heart's core. This is his misfortune. If he had stormed at her, scolded her heartily, shown himself abominably jealous, she could have understood him, —having been brought up in an atmosphere where every one said just what he or she thought at the moment, where anger, justly shown, was accepted in a right spirit, and a storm or two in the week considered of little consequence. That Trefusis, though she knew he must be angry with her, should refrain from saying so, makes him at once even a greater stranger to her than he was before. Larry would have said so much! and then she could have explained; but he, Mr. Trefusis, he will say nothing. She feels suffocated. Suddenly a sense of anger, most honest anger, stirs her breast. She turns to him a charming face, now all frowning with her thought.

"Why don't you say what is in your mind?" she cries, her head well upheld. "Why are you hiding things? Why don't you say at once that you are furious because I was playing hide-and-seek with Larry? Why shouldn't I play hide-and-seek with him and the boys? I've played it all my life up to this, and nobody ever was angry with me before. As for Larry, he is as good as my brother——"

"Better, no doubt," says Trefusis, misunderstanding her purposely.

"You know what I mean!" stamping her foot. "He is the same to me as if he were my brother. Why shouldn't he be?"

"You have already two," says Trefusis. "But

I assure you I do not grudge you another. What I do grudge is that I have come here at an unfortunate time, and so spoiled your amusement."

"You have not spoiled it."

"Judging by your face——"

"My face?" She colors hotly. "I was slightly taken aback, certainly, because, as I have said, I know you do not like me to—to——"

"Enjoy yourself?" suggests Trefusis, coldly. "Is that the view you take of it,—of me? It is not a correct one: I so desire your enjoyment that I shall go now. I half promised to call at the rectory, so perhaps when my visit there is at an end you will be able to receive me—to——"

"Ah! I knew you were angry," says Terry, contemptuously. "And all because of Larry!"

There is so much truth in the accusation that Trefusis makes her no answer for a moment. Then, "Do you think I have no cause to be jealous?" he asks, calmly.

She stares at him. Then something like laughter grows in her pretty eyes, chasing the anger out.

"Oh! Jealous!" says she. "Fancy *you* being jealous!" She looks and evidently is amused, though in a somewhat supercilious style.

"You do not give me credit for even so much feeling," says Trefusis, regarding her curiously. What does she think about him? What are her thoughts? Perhaps there are no thoughts at all. "Yet," says he, "I can feel, now and again."

He takes a step nearer to her, to where she is leaning on the old gate, idly, and perhaps a little defiantly, swinging herself to and fro. "I feel that if I were anything to you in the world, you would occasionally wear something I had given you."

It has been a sore point with him. To do him justice, he is one of the most generous men alive, and this his allusion to the gifts he has bestowed, nay, rather, heaped upon her, must not be taken in a wrong sense. The sense with him indeed, at this moment, is one of injustice. If she has accepted him, why will she not acknowledge her bondage?

He lifts her hand, looks at it, and drops it again.

"You will not even wear your engagement ring," says he. "The commonest courtesies of society demand that. However distasteful to her"—he draws his breath sharply—"a girl's future husband may be, still, she wears his ring."

"I am not in society," says Terry, softly, feverishly. She gives a little glance round her, as if hoping that the heavens above will be kind and send her a protection,—in other words, a chance of escape from this most embarrassing conversation.

"As for the ring, it is lovely," she says, hurriedly. "I'm quite sure I told you how lovely I think it. But I am not accustomed to rings, and—it is heavy!"

"Heavy?" His face has hardened. "It weighs on you? Perhaps your engagement weighs on you too?"

"You mean——" says she, quickly, so quickly that he dares not go on. Dares not? He wonders at himself; but if he should go on, what would she say next? And could he dare that? He despises himself utterly, as he makes his next remark.

"Let me get you a lighter one, then," he says.

And, as usual, weakness is its own reward. Terry makes an impatient movement.

"Why should I wear rings at all?" says she. "I don't want them. They don't suit me, nor my dresses, nor the boys, nor anything else belonging to me. We are so poor, the boys and I."

"You will not always be poor," says Trefusis, steadily. "When you are my wife you shall have as much money as I have. "You shall," he goes on slowly, steadily, "have all that I have."

"Oh, money!" says the girl, with extraordinary contempt, seeing that all her life she has been bereft of it. "I hate money!"

Trefusis turns and takes a step backward and forward. What does she mean now? What does it all mean? Had she made a mistake when she said her heart was free? Even now he cannot believe that she has wilfully lied to him.

She could not lie! But she might mistake; and if so—— He comes back to her.

"You did not always speak like this," says he, quietly, but in an icy tone. He had always told himself he would not coerce her in any way. "When first I asked you to marry me, you——"



"Ah!" Terry breaks in with a slight but eloquent gesture. She looks at him as if he had struck her. "You remember that, what I said to you that day? You will remember it always! Always!" She stops as if thinking. "Even after we are married," says she, in a tone so low as to be almost unheard, "you will remember it!"

Trefusis stands silent. Those words, "after we are married," are still ringing in his ears. They are like fire running through his veins. She still thinks, then, of that "sweet consummation" as possible? Why, here is hope still, in spite of all evil prognostications!

"Don't misjudge me more than you can help," says he.

"I don't misjudge you at all," is the careless answer. "I understand you perfectly. You are very good to me, very kind, very"—with a pause—"generous. But"—she quite startles him by the way she flashes round upon him now, her eyes brilliant, her color deepening—"what puzzles me is, why you want to marry me!"

For a moment Trefusis worries his brain for an answer. The real answer seems so inadequate. Yet, after a prolonged examination of his powers of reply, he comes back to it.

"Because I love you," he says, simply. There is nothing lover-like, however, in his tone. He has answered truly, honestly, but with a distinct sense of injustice.

Terry frowns. She makes a little impatient gesture that has disbelief in it.

"Queer. This is the first time you have said so," says she, with a little elevation of her shoulders that means many things.

She turns from him, and, leaning on the gate, with her back deliberately turned to him, stands tapping her foot impatiently against the ground. Why doesn't he go and pay his visit to the rector? Her act is distinctly discourteous.

Trefusis, left thus in the background, savage at heart, yet filled with some strange hope, goes quickly to her, catches her, turns her round with a swift force, and kisses her!

She shakes herself free, draws back, and looks at him with parted lips and flaming eyes. His caresses hitherto have been so few and far between, so expected, so touched with the coldness of routine, that this strange impetuous kiss has shaken her.

She makes a little inarticulate gesture, as if to push him from her.

"Go! go!" says she, with a faint violence. "I can't bear it!"

"As you will!" He leaves her at once.

His face is hidden from her by the crimson fuchsias that he passes on his rapid way, yet she has a faint remembrance of it as white,—whiter than it ought to be.

## CHAPTER X.

But wide as pathless was the space  
That lay our lives between,  
And dangerous as the foaming race  
Of ocean-surges green.

"OH, Terry, how lovely you look!" says Mrs. Adare, coming into the room she has assigned Terry for to-night, the night of her ball.

"Do I?" Terry asks, naïvely, advancing towards her cousin, and looking at her with anxious eyes. "Lovely is such a big word. But do I look presentable,—nice,—like other girls, I mean?"

"Not a bit!" says Fanny. "You look a thousand times nicer than any girl I've ever seen. I only hope to goodness my girls" (alluding to two little tots in the nursery) "when they grow up will look just like you. There! Can flattery farther go? What a blessing I made you accept this dress from our old relative! Really, I hardly knew how delicious you *could* look until to-night! Poor Gerard! Are you going to show yourself to him like this without a word of warning? It might be fatal. I think he ought to be prepared."

"You needn't be uneasy," says Terry, making a contemptuous little *moue*. "He is not so easily upset as you seem to think. He will stick his glass in

his eye, regard me critically for a moment, and say, 'White becomes you!' That will be all."

"I think you are a little unfair to him," says Fanny. She studies the girl with some anxiety. "What is his fault?" she asks. "Is he not kind, thoughtful? Was there ever a more attentive lover? Does he ever find fault with you?"

"He does nothing but find fault with me. He"—with a sudden burst of anger long restrained—"he disapproves of me."

"Nonsense, Terry! What has he said to you, to make you come to such an extraordinary conclusion?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all," indignantly. "That is the worst of it. If he would say something, I could forgive him. But he only thinks, and thinks, and looks, and looks. I," passionately, "can't bear it. If he would only once get really mad with me,—say something dreadful, swear at me,—I could like him better. I could at all events," gloomily, "understand him."

"My dear Terry——"

"But he won't," says Terry, with dreary conviction. "I'm sure he thinks it isn't a respectable thing for a man to say——"

"Cuss words?" suggests Fanny, gravely. She is secretly convulsed with mirth.

"No," frowning. "Cross words, to a woman."

"Perhaps experience has taught him that there is little to be gained by them,—that they bring in, as

a rule, more kicks than ha'pence," says Fanny, whose speech is a model of propriety in the drawing-room, but who can give herself away very considerably in her bedroom. "And so all you have to object to in Gerrard is that he won't swear at you!"

"Oh! If you can't be sober!"

"My dear girl, I haven't touched a drop of—tea since——"

Terry abruptly leaves the room, angered the more by the sound of Fanny's suppressed laughter, that seems to echo down the corridor behind her.

If Mrs. Adare had meant to advocate Trefusis's cause, she has certainly failed. Her sense of humor has killed her design.

It is with an ever-increasing anger against Trefusis—against the man she has promised to marry—that Terry runs down the stairs and straight to the library.

On the threshold she pauses, standing behind the velvet portières as if half afraid to draw them aside.

Is any one down before her? Suddenly she does draw the curtains, and, holding one in each hand, peeps in. Standing so, she makes a charming picture,—a picture all white, white silk and lace, and a grace most indescribable, a beauty rare, a sweetness and perfection not to be surpassed. So she stands looking in, her white gown framed on either side by the rich red of the velvet hangings. Her lovely face, lit by happy expectation, is brilliant, her whole

air almost tremulous with delight. To the two gazing back at her she seems like the incarnation of youth and light and love.

Thy cheek is o' the rose's hue,  
My only jo and dearie, O ;  
Thy neck is like the siller dew  
Upon the banks so briery, O ;  
Thy teeth are o' the ivory ;  
Oh, sweet's the twinkle o' thine e'e !  
Nae joy, nae pleasure blinks on me,  
My only jo and dearie, O .

To the two looking back at her she is certainly their "dearie O." Seeing them, she makes a step forward, letting the curtains swing behind her. Larry is the first to move ; Trefusis stands silent, his eyes fixed on her. He had not anticipated, perhaps, the Irishman's impetuosity ; and, besides, he would not have stirred if he could. He is content to gaze and gaze. It is as though he is looking at her for the first time : she seems to him a revelation, and indeed in a sense she is. He has seen her, up to this, only in dresses much the worse for wear, and now—— ! In her very shabbiest frock he had always thought her the prettiest girl he had ever met, but he had not known how beautiful she could be !

"Oh, I say ! How awfully pretty you look !" says Larry, in his boyish way. He too is astonished at the change in her. He catches her hand and draws her into the centre of the room under the big

chandelier, from which many wax candles cast their gleams upon her, as if in love with her. "Is that the dress the Old Demon gave you? If so, I forgive her a lot of her sins!"

"You like me?" asks Terry, gayly. She is feeling a little excited, a little vain, perhaps, and decidedly a little angry. Trefusis has not said one word.

"Oh, you know I love you," says Laurence, with a rather forced mirth. "You will give me a dance, won't you? I ask in a hurry, as I see," shaking his head with a mixture of despair and pride in her, "your card will be full five seconds after you enter the dancing-room."

"A dance? Any dance!" says Terry, quickly, smiling charmingly at him. She has never glanced at Trefusis since that first quick look she gave him on her entrance; and indeed, so far as she concerns herself with him now, he might as well not be in the room,—perhaps better. "Will you have the first waltz?"

"The first?" repeats Larry, with a little stammer. "But that," with a rather uncomfortable glance at Trefusis, who is looking perfectly placid and unconcerned, "is promised, of course."

"No, it isn't," shaking her charming head. "Strange as it may sound to you, not a soul has asked me for it." It gives her a kind of wicked joy to say this in Trefusis's hearing. For the last two days he had spoken to her now and again of

Fanny's coming dance, and in a way had given her to understand that this and that dance should be his. But he had not directly asked her for the first, and this had nettled her. He had made so sure. She was his property, it seemed, and she was to keep open her card for him. "Won't you have it?" she asks. She gives Larry a distinctly coquettish glance from under her long dark lashes.

"Thank you," says O'More,—a little gravely, however.

Terry looks back over her soft round shoulders to admire the train behind her.

"So you like my dress?" says she to Larry.

"Oh, like it!" says that young man, ecstatically.

"It is perfect; and so are you."

Terry turns her eyes slowly at last on Trefusis. His silence has irritated her into speech.

"And you?" she asks. "What do you think of it?" There is defiance in her air. Trefusis regards her calmly for a moment or two, then lets his gaze travel over her gown in a slow, unburied fashion.

"It suits you very well," he says, indifferently.

Terry turns away from him, bitterly affronted. She laughs, however, as she turns. Such a cold answer, after all dear Larry's loving admiration! What a fool she must be, to fancy at times that he is in love with her!

She runs quickly to a long mirror, and stares at the charming reflection therein, a reflection with a considerably heightened color and flashing eyes.



This replica of her pretty self she regards with studied approval for a while.

"You are right," says she, nodding her head gayly at herself. "It *does* suit me. But, Larry, what about this sleeve? Isn't the ribbon a little high, eh? Come here and look."

Larry rushes to her.

"A little perhaps," says he. "If there can be a fault anywhere, it is there. Shall I flatten it a bit?"

"Yes, but take care."

"Now," patting the ribbon anxiously, though to Trefusis, looking imperturbably on, it seems that he is patting the pretty childish shoulder only, "will that do? There!" standing back to admire her afresh. "You are, if possible, half an inch lovelier than you were a moment ago. But I assure you, Terry, you didn't want that touch. You," tenderly, "would take the shine out of the lot of them, even if you were dressed in that old black gown of yours. As it is, I tremble for the consequences. To-night will draw tears of blood from——"

"Nonsense!" interrupts Miss O'More, lightly. "You rave! Here, fasten my gloves. You seem to have nothing to do but talk nonsense; and these buttons will help you through your time." She laughs merrily, and holds out to him her slender hand.

"After all," says Laurence, critically, taking the hand she has held out, but gazing at her shoulder,

"I don't think I like what I did to that ribbon. I think I'll pull it up again. Just wait a moment——"

Trefusis walks in a leisurely fashion to the door, opens it, goes out, and closes it almost silently behind him. There is no haste, no noise, no suspicion of anger. Laurence looks at her.

"He's angry about that waltz," says he, with a badly subdued and most unholy joy. "Terry, if——"

"Oh, never mind him," says Terry, petulantly. "Get my gloves fastened, can't you?"

At this moment one of the servants enters the room, and brings to Terry a very exquisite bouquet. It is all white, and suggests Covent Garden at once. It had arrived a little late by the nine-o'clock train.

"For you, Miss O'More, with Mr. Trefusis's compliments," says the man.

A pang of remorse troubles Terry's breast. She takes the flowers and looks at them. He must have expected them, told his man to unpack them the instant they came, and have almost met him with them as he left the room just now. After all, she had behaved very queerly to him, very coldly, at all events; and he *has* been good to her and the boys, especially to the boys. It has been a little grievance with her of late that the boys have so gone over to his side. But what would not boys do, she tells herself, for cricket-bats, and tennis-rackets, and pen-knives, and unlimited pocket-money? But in this she wrongs boyhood generally, for what boy of de-

cent sort can be bought over by the gems of Golconda? Certainly the O'More boys could not. As a fact, they like Trefusis for himself.

Yes, he has been kind to the boys. She ought to like him for that alone.

Whilst thus struggling with her better nature, Miss Anson enters the room.

## CHAPTER XI.

Dark is the blue of her soft-rolling e'e.  
Red, red are her ripe lips, and sweeter than roses.  
Where could my wee thing wander frae me?

"ARE we the first down?" she says. "How delightful! I like being punctual; it says so much for one." She is looking larger than ever, in a very handsome dress of amber tulle over amber satin. Her fine broad shoulders shine out of it. Her nose is magnificent. She looks as if she ought to have a laurel wreath upon her brow.

"What delicious flowers!" says she, dipping the Roman nose into them, and coming out apparently much refreshed. "From"—with a massive smile at Larry—"Mr. O'More?"

"No. From Mr. Trefusis," returns Terry, shortly.

"Ah! How perfect! And how they match your gown! I quite thought they had been Mr. O'More's gift. Mr. Trefusis does not seem to me—I don't know how you regard him,—but—well, hardly an idealist, you know. Sort of man who would like everything to go on velvet; a perfectly appointed house, for example, a correct ménage, faultless servants, a—well a pretty wife, you know, to sit at the head of the table—*just* to sit at the head of his table. You know the sort of man, don't you?"

"No, I don't," says Terry, quietly.

"But you must, you really must!" says Miss Anson, growing quite elephantinely playful; "because you know Mr. Trefusis. As I say, he is not an idealist, he is not romantic. Now, you, Mr. O'More," turning her handsome face to him, "you look romantic. You look capable of anything."

"Thank you," says Larry, laughing. He has hardly followed Miss Anson's argument. "Is that a compliment, or—the other thing?"

"Not the other thing, certainly. Well," smiling blandly, "aren't you going to ask me for a dance?"

"Am I not!" says Larry, effusively. He likes her in a way, and besides, like most people inclined towards *embonpoint*, she dances very lightly. "May I have the second waltz?"

"The second? How ungallant!" says Miss Anson, who is now touching up her fringe before a mirror. "Why not the first?"

"That is my cousin's," says Larry.

"Your cousin's!" Miss Anson stays the fluffing up of her fringe to stare at him, as one who disbelieves her ears.—"But surely," addressing Terry direct, "you have given the first to Mr. Trefusis, of course. I have heard a word or two here and there about you and him."

"Still, I *have* given the first waltz to Laurence," replies Terry, coldly; then a sense of honesty compels her to add, "Gerrard did not ask me for it."

"Ah!" says Miss Anson. A sudden last hope springs to life within her breast.

It is past midnight, and by this time most programmes are full. There has been very little heart-burning to-night even among the notorious wall-flowers of the neighborhood, for Fanny has seen well to her men. She has not only filled her own house for the occasion, but has induced her neighbors to fill theirs also, and has secured two regiments, or at least as much of two regiments as are stationed in the barracks in the next town.

Past midnight, and as yet Terry has not once danced with Trefusis. Not once has Trefusis asked her to dance with him. He has been delightful each time they have met in dancing-room or hall or corridors, in any of the innumerable little sitting-out places that the considerate Fanny has arranged for her guests to flirt in, and he has been most anxious to know if she had had some supper, but he has not asked her to go in to supper with him. This fact has been commented upon a little by some of the guests, Terry's lucky engagement to a rich Englishman having been discussed right and left over every afternoon tea-table in the county twenty-four hours after it was made public. It has also been remarked how very often she has danced with her cousin, Laurence O'More; she has also danced with Mr. Kitts, a most frivolous person, and that young man in the Lancers, and the Poet, all three of whom

are staying at the Hall ; but nobody takes any notice of *them*. Speculation, however, is high about Larry. Used there not to be old passages between her and her cousin ? Surely Mr. Trefusis had better look to it. But, after all, who knows ?—a fashionable man like that, and a little country-girl like Terry ! No doubt he has tired of his bargain, etc, etc.

Miss Anson has said a few of these little things during the evening whenever opportunity was given her. Indeed, she has not been beyond making her opportunities.

“How handsome those O’Mores are !” says old Lady Mackenzie, the “grand old woman” of the immediate neighborhood, who might indeed have been called the “grand old man,” so healthy is the moustache that adorns her upper lip. She peers across the room as she speaks, through her gold-rimmed glasses, to where Terry is standing with Laurence. “She ought to have married her cousin, you know, my dear general, she ought indeed. And I dare say she will, too, judging by what I see to-night. Really, though, poor as they both assuredly are, it seems a pity to spoil——” She stops abruptly, becoming conscious that Trefusis is beside her, having just paused in his waltz with Miss Anson. “Oh, you there, Mr. Trefusis ?” says she. “Well,” frankly, and getting out of her awkward corner with supreme *aplomb*, “I should not have said that, perhaps ; I certainly should not, if”—with a twinkle in her small old eyes—“I had known you were so

near me ; but you must confess Laurence O'More is uncommonly good to look at."

"I think he is one of the handsomest men I ever met in my life," says Trefusis, smiling delightfully at her.

"Ah ! that is generous," says the old lady. She gives him this stab because she thinks he deserves it. In her time a lover *was* a lover and to be outrageously jealous on the smallest provocation was the fashion. What does he mean by his smile, and his acquiescence about Larry's beauty ? What does the creature mean ? "I'd advise you to look to your guns, however," says she, tartly. "Terry is a little coquette. All Irish girls are flirts. You shouldn't make too sure ; you should keep your eye on her."

"The difficulty is to keep one's eyes off her," says Trefusis, unmoved, and smiling always.

"Ah, but there are too many eyes upon her," says old Lady Mackenzie, exasperated by his coolness.

"That is what I think. You shouldn't, you really shouldn't," says Trefusis, lightly. "You might keep yours off, you know."

He passes his arm around Miss Anson's waist, and again disappears among the dancers.

Miss Anson is at her best to-night. The amber gown suits her to perfection. It tones her, and makes the whiteness of her regal shoulders even whiter. She looks, however, a little bigger than usual,—a fault, perhaps, but then they say you can't have too much of a good thing. Her arms, if large,



are splendidly modelled, and her feet, beneath her amber petticoat, look like anything but little mice as they peer in and out: they are indeed substantial members, and worthy of the fine frame they were made to uphold. The Poet has been struck with her.

Mr. Evingley—or “The Poet,” as his friends affectionately (or otherwise) call him—is a young gentleman with a long nose and no chin. He has also three hairs on his upper lip, that must be the toughest hairs on record, as, though he never ceases tugging at them, they never yield to the attack. He had once sent a poem to a leading magazine; the editor in a misguided moment had accepted it, and in due course published it on the last page. On the strength of this, Mr. Evingley has ever since posed “as a writer of sweet verse” (this is his own expression); and now that Lord Tennyson has left us disconsolate, he has hopes of the Laureateship.

He is at this moment falling against a wall, in the latest known fashion, gazing at Miss Anson with lack-lustre eyes, when Mr. Kitts comes up to him; whereon he rouses himself sufficiently, though very sadly, “to speak dull prose” (his own again) about the stars outside, which to-night indeed are resplendent.

Now, Mr. Kitts is a Philistine, pure, but not simple. He is a young man of about—well, his mother alone knows his age, and she is dead; but one might say that he was twenty-one. This you

might say to-day, but to-morrow you would be sure to say he was thirty, and the next day you would hark back again, and say you knew he was only twenty-five ; at all events, only one thing is sure, and that is that no one has ever called him forty. He is a young man who, if not possessed of extreme charms outwardly, is certainly filled to the brim with an unquenchable flow of animal spirits and small talk, that would have made his fortune in other times. As a cheap jack, for example, he would have been invaluable, and would doubtless have died a millionaire.

Then he will talk : " Good gods ! how he will talk !" Easier to stop the current of the Shannon than that of Mr. Kitts's conversation once he has started.

The Poet has been maundering on about the stars for so considerable a time that Mr. Kitts at last grows angry.

" I confess," says he, " I like the stars that are earth-born better. My dear fellow, you should encourage home manufacture. It's your duty, and, disagreeable as it may be to you——"

" Duty belongs even to the gods," says Mr. Evingley, solemnly ; " then why not to us poor worms ?"

" Well, now, I like you to take it like that," says Mr. Kitts, regarding him with immense admiration. " It sounds so modest—and from you ! Worms ! That's a good word ! Worms ! Wrigglers ! ' Then

why not to us poor wrigglers? It is immense! Even you! Do you wriggle?"

"Ah! what a question! That is the fault of the uninitiated," says the Poet, who certainly is beginning to wriggle a good deal: "they are so material. No soul! Now, if you had a soul——"

"I shouldn't wriggle. Well, I always understood I had one somewhere, but if you tell me I haven't"—cheerfully—"I'm quite prepared to believe you. In the mean time, let us come back for a moment to mundane matters, if"—politely—"you can spare the time. We were talking, if you can remember, of the minor constellations—the earth-stars—the *glow-worms* shall we call them? Can I so far venture?"

"Ah, not bad, not bad; really sweet little simile," says the Poet, with a piteous smile. "Glow-worms! There is certainly one glow-worm in this room to-night, who——"

"You've noticed her?" says Mr. Kitts, changing his manner in a sudden and beginning to hunt the room with his eyes for Terry.

"Ah, yes. I have been feasting on her," says the Poet, sadly. His eyes are devouring the room for Miss Anson.

"Well, as to that," says Kitts, who has at last seen Terry, "I don't think she'd make much of a meal, but I'm sure I never saw her look so well."

"Sweet! very sweet!" cooes the Poet, ecstatically. "A mere breath, as it were, but so satisfying."

"A veritable *soufflé*!" cries Kitts, enthusiastically,

who is beginning to enjoy himself. "I'm glad you agree with me about her. Evingley, do you think I too might be a poet? I feel like one, when I look at her! And in that dress, too——"

"Ah! that amber dress! That diaphanous vapor——"

"Great Scott!" says Mr. Kitts, but to himself, "the idiot has evidently been thinking of that big Anson girl all the time. So much for poets!"

As a fact, the two girls, Geraldine Anson and Terry, have been standing at the end of the room with their partners while this conversation has been going on.

"Yes. Yes, I see," says he aloud.

"She is special. So very, *very* special," says Mr. Evingley, with something that sounds like a sob. "Haven't you noticed it?"

"The speciality! I'm so dull, you know," says Kitts, trying to look as if he wanted to cry. "We miserable outsiders, what can we know of beauty?"

"Ah, that is true, dear friend. But you should cultivate yourself; you should lower yourself at the feet of a master, and learn from him. As for Miss Anson—I think we were dwelling upon her—how calm she is! Like a dream! So beautiful! 'A dream within a dream!' You know the precious lines. Now, Miss Anson seems to me, when she moves, not so much to walk as to float—to sail——"

"Like a man-o'-war," suggests Kitts, enthusiastically.

The Poet frowns upon him. "Like a cloud," says he.

"A storm-cloud, judging of her from afar," says Mr. Kitts, who now has given way to wild if secret mirth.

And indeed Miss Anson's face at this moment is not descriptive of the cloud at even, the calm cloud, as we are accustomed to see it. It is now cold and angry. Even the most impartial observer might have called it ill-tempered. As a fact, she has just been asking Trefusis why Terry had not given him that first waltz. And Trefusis's answer has angered her.

He had laughed. Didn't she know that it was bad form for engaged people to dance together? No? Why, it is considered in decent circles only a little worse than married people dancing together. Still, if Miss Anson clings to old-fashioned ideas, she need not be altogether unhappy, because he hopes—he is not sure, but he hopes to induce Miss O'More to give the go-by to both their prejudices (heavy emphasis on the both), and to let him have one waltz before the night is finished.

No wonder Miss Anson's fair handsome face looks like a storm-cloud.

Yet the storm in Miss Anson's face is nothing to the storm in Trefusis's heart, as presently, his dance with the latter coming to an end, he goes up to Terry, who had just finished her dance with Laurence.

## CHAPTER XII.

"Our armies swore terribly in Flanders," cried my uncle Toby, "but nothing to this."

"MAY I have this dance?" he asks. His face is a study. Terry starts and changes color. Laurence had gone off a moment before to fulfil his engagement with a most uninteresting old girl belonging to the Gabbett tribe, so that she feels herself without so much as one spear to her back. It is, unfortunately, one of the supper dances, and impossible to refuse. Something in his manner tells her that he knows she is not engaged for it.

"Certainly," she replies, slowly, coldly.

"That is very good of you," says he, in a rather untranslatable tone. To Terry it sounds too suave.

It is the first time she has ever danced with him, and half-way round she is obliged to confess to herself that his dancing is beyond reproach. He is, indeed, the best partner she has ever had. "He is a piece of perfection," she tells herself, with a disgusted but inward shrug. "He does everything excellently well. How I hate perfection!" Her own dancing is a thing of beauty,—a fact Trefusis acknowledges with far greater generosity than she had accorded to him. In spite of the fact that he

would not ask her, he had been longing to dance with her all the night, and now as he holds her in his arms (it is very seldom during his engagement that he has ever held her so) he wishes devoutly he had forgiven her wilful ill-treatment of him earlier in the evening.

How exquisite she is! How perfectly her graceful form keeps time with the music! She seems to sway to it, as a slender stalk to a breeze.

When you do dance, I wish you  
A wave of the sea, that you might ever do  
Nothing but that.

She puts an end to the waltz herself.

"I am tired," says she, in a courteous but unfriendly tone.

"A sudden fatigue," says Trefusis, with, however, unflinching calm. "I am afraid what you really mean is that you do not like dancing with me."

"I am sorry you should look at it in that light," says she, with an indifference that belies her words.

"Will you come and sit down?" he asks.

But this is the last thing Terry desires,—a *tête-à-tête* with him. She is sufficiently conscience-stricken to know that she has been in fault all through, and to sit out five, perhaps ten, minutes with him alone——

"Oh, no!" says she, hurriedly.

"Not even when you are so tired?" There is surprise in his voice; polite surprise, no more.

There is, however, a rather mocking smile within his eyes, that enrages Terry.

"You are right. It will rest me to sit down for a few minutes," she says. She turns abruptly, and, taking the initiative (as if action of some sort is necessary to her in her present mood), leads the way into an adjoining apartment, a small room fantastically draped in red and yellow and with one low lamp burning on a table in the distant corner. Here she flings herself upon a lounge, and, opening her fan, studies the rose-buds on it, as if seeing them for the first time. Suddenly remembering it is one of his gifts, she closes it again with a click.

"Well," says Trefusis, slowly, "what is my crime?"

"Your crime?"

"Why would you not dance with me to-night?"

"What a question from you!" says she, flushing crimson,—“you, who never asked me until it was almost time for every one to go home.”

"How could I ask you before? I felt quite afraid to do it." There is again that mocking light within his eyes, and she draws her breath sharply. "After your reception of me early in the evening——"

"Your reception of me, you mean. Your manner when I asked you how my dress looked,—you can't have forgotten that. It," passionately, "was studied—meant! Meant to humiliate me before——" She hesitates.



"Before your cousin ! Pray do not refrain from mentioning him on my account. As to humiliating you, that is an absurd argument, as it is quite out of my power to do so. And," a little haughtily, "if I had it, I should not exercise that power where any woman was concerned. For the rest, your cousin had been so eloquent in his admiration of you that he left me literally without an adjective to go upon ; and, besides, when he was there to praise you, what would be the use of my pæans?"

"Every one can talk," says Terry, rising tumultuously to her feet. "It is the easiest thing in the world. But nothing can alter a fact. You were very rude to me before Larry, and you know it."

"You seem to bring Larry a good deal into the question," he says, coldly. "Perhaps you would like to bring him into it a little more,—*altogether*?" His lips now have taken a very fine smile. His manner is undoubtedly abominable.

"You mean——?" says the girl, regarding him earnestly.

"Whatever you wish," icily.

"No, no. Let us have it in words. You are annoyed about something. Though you smile, and try to show nothing," she cries, impetuously, "I can see that you are angry. What is it?"

"If you compel me to speak," says Trefusis, "perhaps—it is very unreasonable of me, of course—but perhaps I *do* object to my future wife dancing



all night with another man." His lips have grown a little white.

"All night—with Larry?" She turns upon him indignantly, but she has betrayed herself for all that. He had not given a name to the "other man;" she has!

"I see you quite understand," says Trefusis, grimly. "And, now that we are upon the subject, I think I had better say at once that if 'Larry'—I think it is 'Larry' you call him—is so indispensable to your happiness, you had better consider, before marrying me, the fact that in all probability you will see him very little after your marriage. I know you are fond of facts, so I mention it."

"I wonder you can't say what you have to say without all this rigmarole," says Miss O'More, who really ought to be given a medal for the "come to the point" service. "What you mean is that you want to break off our engagement. Well," looking full at him, and looking like an angel of beauty as she does so, but of the destroying type certainly, "you need not wait: you can put an end to it as soon as you like. I shall not place an obstacle in your way."

Trefusis regards her steadily.

"You would be glad?" asks he at last,—“glad to be rid of me?”

"Neither glad nor sorry," says the girl, unflinchingly.

"Not glad?"

"No." She pauses. There is evidently a struggle going on within her. Trefusis tells himself that the worst will soon be over. She is going to confess at last that her heart is not her own to give to him or any man, save one. He had been white before. He is a little whiter now. He has always believed her honest. And he was right: she proves it now.

"I told you," says she, stammering painfully, "I would marry you, because—because of the boys."

"That is nothing! Terry!" He goes to her, catches her hands, and holds them in a painful grip. "Swear to me that you are not in love with your cousin!"

"With Larry? How do you mean?" she asks, nervously. "If you want me to say I am not fond of him——"

"That is beside it," with fierce impatience. "Do you love him? do you want to marry him?"

"Marry him! Oh, no!" says Terry, fervently. "How could you think that? I," with a heavy sigh, "don't want to marry any one."

"And me least of all." He flings her hands aside.

"Well, why should I like you?" she cries, trembling. "You, who are always so cold, so critical, so——"

"Hateful! Don't mince matters."

"Yes, hateful, then—to me. You can be very charming to others,—to Miss Anson,"—she pauses, and a flood of hope drowns his misery for a moment,

but it recedes again at her next words, "and Fanny, and Miss Mainwaring, and all the rest of them. To me only you are unkind."

"Unkind?"

"Yes, awfully unkind. You find fault with me from morning till night. I—at home, at all events—I am supposed to have quite a good temper, but with you—look at me now!" spreading forth her hands angrily. "I was never in such a bad temper in all my life before. And it is your fault! I am never in a bad temper except when I am with you!"

"It gives us pleasing prospects for our future," says Trefusis, with a somewhat ironical intonation.

"I told Aunt Bridget you wouldn't like me in silk attire," says Terry, breaking fresh ground with astonishing vivacity. "But she *would* deck me out like this, and—I can see you disapprove of me. Not that I care. Other people might, but I don't. And, besides, every one doesn't disapprove of me."

"Your cousin, for example?" suggests Trefusis, whose temper is now hardly his own.

Terry gives him a withering glance and sweeps out of the room.

In the corridor outside she meets Fanny, who immediately seizes upon her.

"You can't go home to-morrow, Terry. Mr. Gabbett has just sent me word that the bazaar must be a week earlier than was first intended, and you know what a number of little odds and ends are still left to be finished. I've sent word to the boys

to come up to afternoon tea to-morrow, and to bring you anything you may want, but you really cannot go. I shall ask some of the nearest people to give us a help with the dolls and things."

"I can't," begins Terry.

"What nonsense! My dear girl, you must! Just consider how perilously near it is now, and I haven't anything to speak of ready yet. There are twenty-four dolls in a state of actual destitution; and you know how clever you are at dressing them. I'm going to get up a regular bee for to-morrow: one always feels a little flat after a dance, and it will do us good to work for the poor,—set us up again after our night's frivolity, and make us feel quite saintly. Now that's settled. The boys will be all right, I assure you," says Fanny, not understanding the real cause of Terry's hesitation.

"Very well: I'll stay," says Terry, slowly.

"By the way, how modest you and Gerrard are!" says Fanny, laughing. "Such a model pair of lovers! I was glad to see you gave him one dance, at all events.—Oh! you!" turning to Mr. Kitts, who has come up, evidently in the last stage of exhaustion. "Is that you?"

"It's what remains of me," says Mr. Kitts, weakly.

"You have been——?"

"I have, indeed. I've been bleating all round the house after you. There's a big woman in red velvet who says she won't leave the house until she

sees you. I do hope you haven't been doing anything?—anything criminal, I mean. She looks awfully wild."

"Oh, it's that tiresome Mrs. Burke," says Fanny, with some disgust. "She always will insist on saying good-by. Such bad taste! It makes all the others go at once, and some of the girls are so enjoying themselves, poor things! Come, take me to her; perhaps I can smuggle her out by the armory door."

Meantime, Terry has escaped.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The doubt of those we love, and, more,  
The rayless dull despair  
When trusted hearts are worthless found,  
And all our dreams are air, but air.

THE house is quiet enough now. Some of the men have gone to the smoking-room, and all the women have gone to their beds, or, at all events, are supposed to have gone there. Mrs. Adare, passing Terry's room, glances in, and, seeing the girl no farther advanced towards rest than the shedding of her ball-gown, the getting into her dressing-gown, and the brushing out of her long and lovely hair, seats herself in the nearest chair and begins an exhaustive conversation about the events of the evening.

"Robbie won't be up for another hour," says she, alluding to her husband, who is in the smoking-room with his guests, poor man, though he would far rather be in bed; "and you can't possibly finish your undressing under ten minutes: so I'll sit here and talk to you."

And talk she does, as gayly and sleeplessly as when she was nineteen, though now I suppose she must be thirty-four at all events. In the middle of

quite an exciting episode that has the woman in red for its heroine, a gentle tap sounds at the door.

"Come in," cries Terry, gayly, who under the charm of Fanny's high spirits has entirely recovered her own; and, the door opening, Miss Anson, still in full ball costume, stands revealed on the threshold.

"You, Geraldine, and not even undressed!" says Mrs. Adare, in great amazement. "What have you been doing, you silly girl?"

"Looking for you," says Miss Anson, frankly. "The fact is, I couldn't undress until I saw you. I—it is awful of me, I know," giving way to rather shamed mirth, "but I am dying of hunger."

"Oh, do you know, so am I," cries Terry. "I didn't eat a bit of supper; and now I remember a pie that was at the side of the table, near the top: I wonder if it is all gone."

"Little gourmande!" cries Fanny. "There, run down, you two, as quickly as you can, and get something to eat. Time is flying, remember, and there is very little of it left for your beauty sleep; and all those people coming to-morrow, too! If you hurry, I dare say the lights won't be out in the supper-room yet, though I must say Patrick is unrivalled at putting out everything at a second's notice. Take a candle with you, and light one of the lamps if you find he has been at it again. There, go!"

She stops Terry, however, for a moment.

"Let me tie back your hair," says she, catching



up a pale-blue ribbon on the table. With this she draws the girl's soft lovely locks into a loose binding behind her head,—such long locks, that fall far below her waist. Fanny, having tied the ribbon, turns her around.

“Oh, how absurd!” says she. “You look like a baby,—a little thing of fifteen.”

She accompanies them to the door and sees them safely down-stairs.

“There are a few men still in the smoking-room,” says she, “victimizing Robbie, but if you go delicately, like Agag, they won't hear you.”

Thus she dismisses them with her blessing, but with hardly sound advice, however, as they have no sooner reached the lowest step than they see Larry coming across the hall.

“I don't believe in visions,” says that young man, advancing, “and I hope it isn't D. T. But what are you doing here?”

He addresses himself to Terry. His eyes, indeed, are fastened on her in open admiration, an admiration that rather galls Miss Anson, who fancies herself a good deal. And, considering that she is in her full war-paint still, and Terry in only a little, simple, white dimity gown (loosely made, and without a vestige of lace about it), one should not take her to task too much for her disgust.

But then Terry is so much prettier in the white dimity, with only her face and her youth and her sweetness.

Miss Anson, seeing him, makes a little gesture as if to go back. She catches Terry's sleeve. Terry looks at her as if wondering.

"It is so late," says Miss Anson, in a would-be whisper.

"It isn't a bit later than it was a minute ago," says Terry, making a most extraordinary calculation, it must be confessed, "and I am still hungry. Larry, we want some supper. Come with us and light the lamps, will you? Fanny says she's afraid Patrick has put them all out, and I'm starving."

"Yes, do come, Miss Anson," says O'More. And Geraldine, finding her prudery is completely thrown away upon these two dense Irish people, and her appetite still most healthy, follows them to the supper-room.

Fanny was right. Patrick has been true to his character. All is in darkness. When Larry, with much difficulty, and the burning of a handsome shade, has lit one lamp, both girls entreat him to let well alone, and get them something to eat.

The pie is still in existence, and Terry is delighted with it. So is Miss Anson. But, finding after a while that Terry and O'More have more to say to each other than to her, she rises, gives them a gentle little inclination of the head, and leaves the room.

"Really it is disgraceful the way that girl flirts with poor dear Gerrard and makes love to her cousin." This is her thought as she ascends the stairs to her room. If Gerrard could only see her

now, sitting there in a mere glimmer of light, in a thin white dressing-gown, talking and laughing with that handsome cousin, he would be less than a man if he bore it. What a pity no one can tell him of it! In all justice his eyes should be opened. If one could see him——

At this moment (she has reached the corridor above) she hears footsteps approaching, and presently finds herself face to face with Trefusis.

“Has sleep no charms for you?” he demands, pleasantly, stopping to say a word. Here is her opportunity.

“Yes, but hunger had even greater,” she returns, laughingly. It is a rather forced laugh. She is thinking of what she shall say next. “Miss O’More and I went down about half an hour ago” (it was really only ten minutes ago) “to the supper-room, to see what we could get.”

“Yes? No supper taken at a proper time, I suppose? Well, I hope you got something.”

“We got Mr. O’More,” says she, demurely. “He took us to the supper-room, and lit the—well—a lamp for us. He was *so* kind. He wouldn’t go away, even though we—I—begged him to do so. He insisted on getting us all sorts of beautiful things,—a pie in especial. He is very amusing, isn’t he?”

“Very!” What is there in her tone that has changed his from kind if indifferent attention to something that might almost be called anger? “And so you got your supper at last?”

"Oh, *I* did! Miss O'More is still finishing hers—with her cousin. You know he *is* so amusing."

"Yes," says Trefusius. It is the same answer, in a sense. He bids her good-night again, and continues his way. Miss Anson, in the shelter of her door-way, watches him. Is he going to his room, or down-stairs?

Down-stairs, certainly.

He turns the handle of the supper-room door with undue violence, and walks in.

The room is enveloped in gloom on all sides (it is a big room), save where Terry and Laurence are sitting, about the middle of the table. Laurence, indeed, is sitting *on* the table, close—very close—to Terry, who is eating something off a plate with evident relish.

It is lobster salad, as Trefusius sees to his disgust. First a gelatine, a pie, was it?—what was it that odious girl had told him?—and then lobster salad! No girl with a conscience would do such a thing as that. She must, indeed, be perfectly heartless to enjoy lobster salad at this hour of the morning, and after all that has passed between them. There lies the crux of the whole thing. After all that has passed!

For a moment they do not heed his entrance, and he has time to look at her; to wonder whether the feeling he has for her is love or hatred; to tell himself that he was mad when he decided on marrying this wilful, ill-tempered, beautiful Irish coquette,

and then to swear to himself doggedly that nothing under heaven shall induce him to give her up, until she dismisses him.

Here Larry looks up and sees him.

"More visions," he cries, though perhaps not quite so heartily, so lightly, this time. "Terry, here comes Trefusis."

Terry starts most unmistakably. "Yes. You?" says she, peering at him through the gloom. "Do you want me?"

"No," says Trefusis, coolly. He advances to the table, draws a chair to it, and seats himself leisurely. "But I heard you and O'More were having some supper here, so I thought I should like to join you."

"How good of you!" says Terry, with an audacious little sneer.

Trefusis casts a quick glance at her. Amazement is in his heart. He had thought to bring down Nemesis upon her head by his sudden entry here; here, where she is supping secretly with her cousin, at an hour when all other members of the household are in bed, or, at all events, supposed to be there; here, in this room, at an hour when the morning light is stealing in through every chink in the shutters, and without a light save that of one weakling of a lamp, that is evidently at its last breath for want of oil, and whose glimmer resembles nothing so much as the farthing rushlight we have all seen—in imagination.

Yet she has the audacity to sneer at him, to put-

him in the wrong,—to remind him by that sneer that she has not forgiven what he said to her at their late encounter. Yet what had that late quarrel been about? Surely about the man with whom she is now sitting at this untoward hour in happy conclave.

"What would you like?" she asks, with a chill but courteous air. "This lobster salad is very good."

"Not lobster salad, I think," says Trefusis. "Pray don't worry yourself about me. I'll look round."

"Try the greengage tart," says Larry, hospitably. Is there malice in the suggestion? Jealousy is green!

Trefusis makes a little gesture: "My dear fellow, don't let me disturb you." He finds some ham somewhere, and sits down directly opposite Terry, and begins the supper he does not want in a most deliberate manner. There is something heroic, indeed, in the way he gets through that ham, hating it all the time.

Meantime, Larry, who suspects a scene later on, and who can always be depended upon at a pinch, is talking away with all his might. He has grown to the heights that are sometimes called brilliant, when suddenly Trefusis stops him by addressing Terry:

"It must be so uncomfortable for you to be eating your supper in so bad a light. Shall I put a match to one of these other lamps? I'm sorry I didn't

think of it when first I came in. You must have been wretched, sitting in the dark like this."

"It is not dark," says Terry, calmly. "And I like a dim light. Don't light another lamp for me, please."

"No? I beg your pardon, O'More. Pray go on: you were saying something about the Burkes' party, I think."

"No. I was only talking about poor Mrs. Burke's wig," says Larry. "It *would* fall to one side, you know. And when she tells you that she never lost a hair since she was seventeen, it comes in awkward. I say, Terry," feeling that the strain is becoming unbearable, "it's getting late, isn't it?"

No one could possibly accuse Larry of irony, but to Trefusis this remark sounds like it.

"Well, if you think so, go to bed," says his cousin, who is now trifling with a bunch of grapes.

"Is that a dismissal?" says Larry, slipping off the table to the ground. He grows rather red. Had this meeting here been arranged between her and Trefusis, and has he been in the way all this time? For a moment his heart beats to suffocation, and then he knows. He is sure. Nevertheless he bids her good-night with some haste, nods to Trefusis, and leaves the room.

"You needn't hurry, Larry. I'm going too," says Terry, rising from her chair, but he leaves them for all that.

Terry looks straight at Trefusis now they are alone. She holds out to him a slim white hand.

"Good-night," says she.

He pushes back his chair and takes her hand,—holds it. In this faint light her eyes are gleaming.

"What does it all mean?" says he. He is putting powerful control upon himself. "You swear to me one moment that you would not marry your cousin for any reason, for any bribe as it were, and yet now I find you here with him at this hour, and in such a confidential mood."

"Was it confidential?" She lets her hand remain in his, but as though it were dead, lifeless, without a movement.

"It looked so. What were you saying to him?"

"Even if I remembered, I certainly should not feel myself bound to tell you," answers she, calmly.

"No? Perhaps, if you did remember,"—the very suppression of all outward anger is making the anger within him a perfect storm of wrath, and is fatally destroying his judgment,—“you would not dare to tell. You were talking of me, perhaps,—accusing me to him——”

Terry draws her hand out of his, with a sharp gesture. She steps back from him.

"Is that what you would do?" she asks, with terrible contempt. "With whom, then, do you talk of me and my many sins and misdemeanors? I shall have to take heed to my ways. I see. Is that your honor? I——" she turns upon him with a



little sob of passion in her throat, "I tell you that is beyond me! I have not got to the height of civilization that permits a girl to discuss the man she has promised to marry with any person on earth."

She turns abruptly to the door. He follows her, and lays his hand upon her arm.

"Terry," says he, quickly, "forgive me that. It was only a momentary madness. I know you would not do it. But"—he has drawn her round so as to face him again, and is now gazing at her—"why can't we be friends?" says he.

"Friends!"

"Yes," hurriedly, "friends. Friendship is a good thing to begin on. I know you do not love me. You," with some irrepressible bitterness, "have given me to understand that too often for me to make a mistake about it. But friendship——"

"How friendly you were to me this evening!" says she, scornfully. "How kind! A friend should be kind, I think; but you——"

"I am sorry for every word I said to you that offended you," he replies, slowly, distinctly. In his secret soul he is wondering at himself: he is apologizing to her, asking her pardon, for the sins of her own committing! Truly he has fallen very low.

It is a pity, perhaps, that he had not so abased himself somewhat earlier. The wilful but lovely head is now turned a little in his direction; two large eyes, soft with dewy tears, are looking into his.

"No, no!" It is a charming penitent who now looks up at him. "I was wrong,—very wrong! I should not have given Larry that first waltz, but"—her voice sinking into a shamed whisper—"I think you *might* have said that I was looking—well, you know—*nice!*"

"I could never say that," says he. "That was not the word." He draws her a little nearer, and she does not resist him. "What word was there to describe you? It is not coined."

Again she looks up at him. The unkillable Irish mirth in her declares itself in the little broken smile, that in the midst of all her agitation and grief lights up her eyes and lips.

"I think you might invent one," says she, with a glance divinely shy. She holds back from him, but at last lets him press his lips to hers, giving him a dainty, unimpassioned little kiss for the warm one he gives her.

Then she slips from his arms, and runs away upstairs. Though she had been distinctly cold to him all through this last interview, perhaps never has he been so nearly *en rapport* with her as on this night, when he had entered the supper-room ready to slay her with his wrath.

## CHAPTER XIV.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;  
Present mirth hath present laughter,  
What's to come is still unsure.

"I REALLY think we shall get things properly in order after all, if we persevere for the next two days," says Fanny, in a satisfactory tone, regarding her working party with a beaming eye. And indeed so she well may. Anything like the energy displayed by all present has seldom been seen before in a private drawing-room.

"For heaven's sake, don't touch my elbow," says Larry to Geoffrey O'More, who is leaning over his shoulder, watching his every movement with an excitement that borders on delirium. "If you do, I'll rend you limb from limb."

Larry is engaged on frame-making in the corner, and there are two or three little water-color sketches in the usual young-lady-like style that we all, alas! know so well, lying beside him, waiting for their mountings. Larry is quite an expert at delicate carpentering, and has been pressed into the bazaar service to-day, though rather against his will. He has now, however, entered into the spirit of his task, and is tremendously busy.

Miss Anson, not far from him, is bending over a

table, enamelling, with really exquisite taste, some scallop-shells in pale blues and greens and crimsons, touched charmingly, here and there, by a little gilding.

"What are these for?" asks Trefusis, stopping for a moment by her table to look down at them.

"For a dressing-table, to hold pins. Pretty, aren't they?"

"Charming. But a bit wobbly, don't you think? The pins will be all sea-sick. Those shells will want to be propped up on every side to keep them steady."

"Will they? It doesn't matter. *I* shan't have to prop them," said Miss Anson, indifferently.

The answer so exactly describes her mental attitude at all times, that Trefusis smiles a little, as he leaves her to take over some shreds of gold and silver tinsel for the beautifying of the dolls that Terry and Mrs. Adare are raising from a shameless state of nature to one of a high-class respectability.

Somebody calling for Fanny at this moment, she leaves Terry and hurries across the room.

"I hope you feel rested," says Trefusis, stopping beside Terry. He tries to catch her eye, but fails. It is the first time he has been able to speak to her since that last curious half-hour the night before, or, rather, early this morning. She had not appeared at breakfast, and indeed had come on the scene only when every one else was well settled down to his or her work, and had then glided to a seat next to

Fanny and begun a diligent crusade against the dolls, who seem rather to resent being dressed. It seems impossible to make them stay this way or that way whilst their things are being "fitted." They wriggle, and wobble, and behave as frivolously as any living person of their own years,—which are tender.

"Yes, thank you," says Terry, in a low tone. She leans a little away from him, and plunges her hands suddenly among the soft masses of the silks and satins he has brought her, as if in frantic anxiety to find something to make the toque for the doll now in hand.

"You look a little pale," says he, lowering his own tone in turn. There is something distinctly confidential about him; something lover-like. This attitude, so new, so unusual, seems to harass Terry.

"Oh, no," says she, quickly. And now, indeed, she verifies her denial. She has flushed a painful crimson. She makes an impatient movement, and the poor doll she is holding, who has done nothing at all, slips from her lap to the ground and comes to a violent and hideous death. When they lift her up they find her nose is broken.

"There," says Terry, with a rather nervous laugh, "see what you have done. Artists should not be interfered with when at their work. You must go away now, and let me undo your guilty deed. Poor doll! and she was looking so nice, too!"

"Must you take off all those things again?" asks he, aghast.

"Yes, of course, and put them on another."

"Don't," says he. "Let her stay like that, and I'll promise to buy her, nose and all, for any sum you like. It is the least I can do. It is a sort of reparation."

"Very well," says Terry, laughing. "I'll ticket her as 'sold.' Poor old thing," eying the doll ruefully, "I must try and patch her up a bit. The first thing I have sold to you, too; and so little worth having."

"Oh, not the first thing, is it?" says Miss Anson, who has just come up. Her tone is innocence itself, her smile quite guileless, and yet something in her voice makes Terry's heart almost stop beating for a moment. Her pretty color dies away. What is it she means?

"What was the first thing, then?" asks Trefusis, with an interested air, looking at her, challenging her, as it were, but apparently without a trace of suspicion.

Miss Anson laughs. "Don't you know?" says she.—"Don't you know?" This to Terry, who shakes her head faintly and feels as if she could not speak. "No? How dull you both are! I know, and, in my opinion, it certainly is worth even less than this last purchase," pointing to the disfigured doll.

"You fill me with curiosity," says Trefusis.

"Pray let us into the secret; I shall be in Miss O'More's debt if you do not. What else have I bought from her, then?"

"Ah, I leave you to find that out," says she, smiling her large, bland smile, and making a movement as if to go away, but Trefusis steps, as if by accident, before her. He has now his back to the room. She alone can see his face.

"No. You shall tell me now," says he. His voice is a command. Miss Anson hesitates for a second, and then feels it will be dangerous to go any further.

"Have you forgotten last Thursday night, then," says she, with a shrug of her fine shoulders, "when we were looking over Mrs. Adare's bits of bric-à-brac for her stall?—and that little swinging monkey, and Miss O'More's asking you to buy it for luck, just to start her?"

Of course they both remember now. It was such a trivial thing, and it happened so many nights ago, and meant so little. Terry's color comes back in a delicate flood, but Trefusis's gaze is still contemptuous as it rests on Miss Anson.

"Really, Miss O'More," says that full-blown damsel as she moves away, "I should take Mr. Trefusis to task if I were you. People in love should never know what it is to forget even a sigh of the one beloved."

With this last little dart, which falls very flat, she takes her buxom way to the other end of the room.

"Truly it would be better for some people if they had never been born!" says Trefusis, looking after her.

"I feel that often," says Terry, slowly, painfully.

"Surely," quickly, anxiously, "you haven't taken to heart her miserable insinuations,—her——"

"No, no, no," putting up her hand quickly. "What I meant was," with a heavy sigh and a sudden rush of tears that drenches her sweet eyes, "that it would have been better for me if I had never been born."

"Or if I had not," he replies, bitterly, and leaves her.

In the distance, near one of the windows, and standing before one of the biggest easels on record, is Mr. Kitts. He is painting away frantically at a little canvas that he has had the audacity to call "A Sunset." From the remotest corner of the room it looks like a scene of carnage, a battle-field of the good old times, when gore was the leading feature, and fire and smoke the rest.

Taken close, it looks as if some one had been sitting on it.

Every one is trying not to see this *chef-d'œuvre* of Mr. Kitts's; all are abstaining from so much as a glance in his direction. The most poignant anguish is stirring the souls of those who fear he will offer it to them as a priceless gift, to be placed upon their stalls. Who would raffle it? And for how much? Who would dare to walk about with it and offer



tickets for it, at even a halfpenny a ticket? The most flagrant impostor in the world of bazaars would not presume to foist Mr. Kitts's masterpiece upon a wondering world.

The Poet, Mr. Evingley, has kindly offered to read aloud to them some tender sonnet whilst they work. And his offer has been accepted. Nature, as he pathetically remarks, has incapacitated him for hard work of any kind,—meaning, presumably, that she has given him over-much brain; but if he can be of use to them in other, lighter ways, he is entirely at their service.

He had at first breathed, rather than spoken, a hint as to his willingness to delight them with some of his own deathless (but as yet unpublished) sweetmeats in the poetical line, but, this gracious insinuation not being received with the rapture it deserved, he had sadly fallen back upon a lower level. Philistines will be Philistines to the end of the chapter.

He has now one of Mr. Swinburne's volumes in his snowy hands,—the "Poems and Ballads,"—and is preparing to read some of the matchless verses therein contained. And, after a whispered entreaty from Mr. Kitts to be sure and put in the asterisks with a free hand,—an injunction which he treats with a fine contempt,—he stretches himself with a languid grace in a lounging-chair and begins to read,—

"Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow!"

At this moment Miss Anson says, hurriedly,—

"Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Evingley, but I think it better to speak before we have got *too* interested."

"I told you, you know," says Mr. Kitts, with a reproachful glance at the Poet: "there's things in that book that——"

"But I've got no more shells," Miss Anson is saying. "Do get me some, somebody, before Mr. Evingley begins again. I do so hate interrupting anybody."

"It looks like it," whispers Fanny to Terry.

Mr. Evingley regards her with a look of gentle resignation.

"I'm so sorry," says Miss Anson. "Fanny, where are the shells?"

"Under the table; at your feet; in a basket," explains Mrs. Adare, in soft jerks. "*Now*, Mr. Evingley! We are quite ready, I think."

"Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow!"

Here the door is burst violently open, and Mr. Adare darts in.

"Fanny, Fanny, where's that small hammer of yours? Canty" (the village carpenter) "says he can't get on without it; he's putting up the art muslins round the stalls and he says——"

"Oh, never mind what he says," cries Fanny, rising impatiently. "My goodness, Robbie, I think you might know by this time that I always keep my hammer in the cabinet."

"I know by this time that you don't," says her husband, very naturally aggrieved at this reception. "I've searched it exhaustively, and there isn't a sign of it."

"Well, if it isn't there it's in the pantry, or in the nursery, or——Oh, stay, Robbie; now I think of it, it's under my bed. I wonder you couldn't think of that."

"I suppose that's a compliment," says Adare, who has a quiet humor of his own. "You evidently think I have a mind above the average." He disappears with a slight grin.

"Now, dear Mr. Evingley," says Fanny, in her suavest tone: "I do hope this is our last interruption."

"Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,"

begins Mr. Evingley, in his most mellifluous tones.

"Miss O'More, ma'am," says the butler, throwing wide the door to admit Aunt Bridget.

Mr. Evingley sinks back in his lounge; the book drops from his lifeless fingers. It is too much! It is much too much!

"Oh, hang it," says Larry, whose acquaintance with poetry is limited, "I do think that poor creature might be allowed to swallow it now, whatever it is. It must be sticking in her throat by this time."

General consternation! What has Larry been thinking about the swallow?

The Poet casts a melancholy eye upon him.

"It is a bird," says he.

"A whole bird?" says Larry. "Bless me! I thought it was only a pill at the worst!"

"Laurence!" says Terry, wildly.

The Poet regards him with a shuddering horror. As for the others, they, I regret to say, have altogether forgotten themselves, and are shaking with laughter. Even Miss Anson, who cannot be accused of having a lively sense of humor, is now bending beneath the table, under the pretence of finding new shells, but in reality to hide her face. And as for Mrs. Adare, she is hiding behind Terry's back, which is rather mean of her, as Terry is certainly desirous of hiding behind hers.

Mr. Kitts has fallen into his canvas. He has smudged it irredeemably. This, however, as Mr. Toots would have said, "is of no consequence." It is, indeed, a most fortunate thing. It seems in some strange way to have altered the character of his work, to have enhanced its charms. It is now "A Moonlight," taken at a good distance,—say a mile and a half.

"Tea!" cries Fanny, joyfully; "here's tea!" Her voice is a little choking still, as she emerges from behind Terry's back and pushes Terry towards the tray that the butler has just brought in. She feels, indeed, as if she could have fallen upon the butler's neck, for his kindly intervention at this critical moment.

"Terry, you will pour it out," she says; "but

not for a while yet. Tea can wait, but we cannot, until Mr. Evingley has read to us the poem of his selection. Dear Mr. Evingley, you *will* be good to us, won't you, in spite of all these hateful interruptions?"

This gracious entreaty, this tender tribute to his charm, restores Mr. Evingley to his usual sense of *bien-être*: he takes up his book again, and this time brings his little effort, as he calls it, to a successful finish.

Then comes tea; they linger over it so long that Fanny at last cries to them, in the voice of the old Egyptian (though perhaps, after all, he was young: the young are the cruellest of all!), "Ye are idle! ye are idle!" Whereon they all fall upon their work again.

"As for you, Gerrard," says Fanny, passing by Trefusis, "you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Ashamed?" says Trefusis. It takes an Englishman some time to collect his wits.

"Yes, thoroughly," says Fanny. "What have you done all day?"

"Oh, that!" says he. "Well, what can I do, after all? I'm but a poor fellow at a thing of this sort."

"You can sing," says Fanny. "That poor idiot over there"—pointing by a shrug to Mr. Evingley, and being, indeed, most ungenerous in her air towards him—"has done his little best; the smallest"—sighing with doleful remembrance of Mr. Eving-

ley's performance—"of all small bests. But you!" with flattering concern, "you can sing, at all events. Now begin; give us something to help us through our work. You can see," with a rueful glance at her helpers, "that they are all straying into gossip of a most meretricious sort; but if you begin to sing they will grow silent again, and with silence the needle and thread will find their own ground again."

"If it is a matter of duty——" says he.

"It is; it is, I assure you. There!" pushing him towards the piano-stool, "sit down, and charm them into silence."

"A moment," says Trefusis. He goes straight to where Terry is sitting, and bends down to her.

"I sang to you once before," says he. "I shall sing to you now again."

He is at the piano now, and has struck a chord or two. He has chosen some words of Lord Lytton's:

Chide not, beloved, if oft with thee  
I feel not rapture wholly,  
For aye the heart that's filled with love  
Runs o'er in melancholy.  
To streams that glide in noon, the shade  
From summer skies is given;  
So if my breast reflects the cloud,  
'Tis but the cloud of heaven!  
Thine image glassed within my soul  
So well the mirror keepeth  
That chide me not if with the light  
The shadow also sleepeth.

To Terry, listening, the words are a reproach ! But so enamoured is she of the sweet music that the sense of the words goes by her. Had it been otherwise she might have been affronted by this song that he has chosen ; but his voice,—it charms her, it holds her as with an enchantment.

When the last notes have sounded, he turns abruptly on the music-stool, and looks towards her. She is leaning forward, her face rapt, her eyes full of tears. Surely “music hath charms.” He thinks of that first night when he had sung to her,—that night in the old school-room in the village,—and a strange sense of power, that has rapture in it, thrills him with a wild new passion. Perhaps through his voice, through the power of music, he can win her. He takes a step towards her. As though noting his desire to come to her, she gets quickly up from her seat, whispers a word to Fanny, and, gliding past her, leaves the room.

With a smothered exclamation, Trefusis picks up the music he has let fall in a somewhat awkward fashion to the floor.

## CHAPTER XV.

Heaven in sunshine will requite the kind.

THE bazaar is held in the school-room in the village, an admirably-sized room, where some time before the magic-lantern had been on view. To-day, however, it is far more effective than on that last occasion, Fanny having taken it in hand. Fanny's taste is undeniable and always to be depended upon, and, as she is the good genius of the poor in this little parish, and is famed for her sweetness and goodness to them, she has thrown her whole heart into the making a success of this bazaar, that is to do wonders for her poor in the cold misery of the coming winter days. Each stall has been arranged with a façade shaped like a huge arch, from which hang draperies of art muslins, each stall having a different color.

The effect is charming. The soft and airy muslins are tied back here and there with fans, and bows of ribbon, and palm-leaves. Inside these delightful tents, all sorts of pretty, shining, delicate, and (it must be confessed) for the most part useless dainties are waiting on their shelves, crying, like the little pigs in the old story, "Who'll eat me? who'll eat me?"



The morning, for a wonder, is brilliant, Providence so often in its mysterious fashion opening the sluice-gates of heaven upon a day, like this, dedicated to the poor. There are more wet bazaar days in a year than there are wet garden-party days. And this is wonderful, because I suppose that for one bazaar there are at least, to put it very reasonably, five hundred garden-parties. Yet the parties are for the rich, the bazaars for the poor. It is all so difficult to understand.

To-day, at all events, is all it ought to be, and the attendance excellent. Every one has come, even the "dear duchess," who has driven a matter of twenty miles to throw her little mite, as she affectionately expresses it, into dear Mrs. Adare's bazaar treasury.

"Dear Mrs. Adare," who knows her, smiles faintly. That "little mite"! How well she knows it, too!

The afternoon is "wearin' awa'," like Jean's old person, and still business is very brisk. Mrs. Adare being very popular, money is flowing gayly into the cash-boxes.

The duchess, who told "dear Mrs. Adare" on her arrival "that she is famished, positively famished," had to be sent up to the Hall under Mr. Adare's care to get some luncheon there, though luncheon, and a very good one too, has been provided on the spot. But then it costs a shilling! The duchess had insisted on lunch at the Hall.

Now, much refreshed, the dear duchess has come back again, having escaped so far the importunities of the stall-holders and the wild maidens who wander around soliciting tickets for the night-dress-bags they are raffling. Now, indeed, her Grace precipitates herself upon the room. Freely she wanders here and there, her huge form swaying as she goes. Twice she has travelled round the school-room, appraising all things as she goes. Much more than twice she has refused to give a shilling to a raffle.

“So naughty, you know, so naughty,” she has said, with elephantine playfulness, to Mr. Adare, who, poor man, has been told off to lead her around, though, as he himself afterwards pathetically remarks, he was not born to be a bear-leader. “Gambling, you know, so horrid. Wicked man, to allow it!”

Anyway, she has walked round the room twice, which in a woman of eighteen stone or so is highly commendable. She has been specially affable to all she meets, calling everybody by their wrong names in the very kindest and friendliest fashion. She has bought a sixpenny doll at every stall except one,—where dolls are not to be purchased. This stall had been extravagantly given up to library requirements of a severe nature. Here she bought a pen-wiper at fourpence, to show she felt no ill will, and that she would rather die than go away without buying all she could.

Having got Mr. Adare to pay for this (she seems determined to pay for nothing but sixpenny dolls), and for her tea at the tea-stall later on, and made him promise to give her a pound towards her ragged school in the slums of London, she bids them all a hearty farewell, waving Mr. Adare an immense kiss from the top of the door-step, and a general wave to the others from the tips of her lips. Every one is naturally much impressed, much delighted.

"Disgraceful old hypocrite!" cries Miss Bridget, sinking into a chair and moping her brows: she has been working manfully all day, and is honestly tired now. "I like to hear her! Coming here," addressing a little audience of the Hall party that has gathered round her, "coming here," she cries, with rising wrath, "to spend tuppence ha'penny, and then going away as if she had set us up for life!"

"Don't talk of us as if we were hens!" says Mr. Kitts, resentfully.

"Robert," says Miss Bridget, catching hold of Adare's coat as he is trying silently and skilfully to go by her, "I saw you with her. You were with her all day. I hope you did not give in to her."

"Give in to her?" Mr. Adare's face shows such astonishment that the others all laugh.

"Yes," says Miss Bridget, angrily. "I mean what I say, in spite of these cackling idiots." She emphasizes this delightful remark by a full look at Mr. Kitts, who instantly succumbs to it. "*Did*

you give in to her? Did you let her swindle you out of anything?"

"Oh, that!" says Adare, rather feebly. At this point his wife, who is present, takes him by the arms.

"Oh, Robbie, what an accusation! Come, speak," says she, putting on a tragic air, "or all is at an end between us."

"Robert, what have you promised that woman?" demands Miss Bridget.

"I'm afraid, a pound or two," says Adare.

"For what?"

"Her ragged schools."

"Weak, contemptibly weak!" says Miss Bridget, while his wife lets his arms go, with an affected sigh of relief. "You don't catch *me* napping like that. She asked me for five pounds for her ragged brigade somewhere in the wilds of London (I don't believe she knows anything about the wilds of London), and I just said, 'My dear woman, there is a ragged regiment here in this town,—your *own* town,—*not* supported by royalty, that it takes all the spare five shillingses I possess to keep so much as even its breeches on it!'"

"Really, Aunt Bridget!" says Mrs. Adare.

"Well, my good girl, what do you want?" says Miss Bridget, who is now greatly incensed. "What's the matter with the breeches? Am I to understand that you would rather have them without them?"

At this they turn and flee.

Trefusis has bought up all the last things *en masse* that remain on Fanny's stall,—Terry being behind it—and has given them to the rector for the poor. It is quite a tremendous bundle, and, as it comprises among other things a considerable quantity of painted tambourines, banjos, bellows, perfumed sachets, and handkerchief-cases, the rector may be justly excused if he looks on the gift with blank amazement.

"But, Mr. Trefusis, have you thought?" says he. "It is more kind of you than I can say, but have you thought how useless these things are for our poor? How can they hang up tambourines in their smoky cabins, and where are the gloves for the cases? You are kind, my dear fellow,—*very* kind; but if they had only been shawls and petticoats!"

"Give the tambourines to the babies," says Trefusis, laughing. "They may get five minutes' fun out of them."

"No, no. With your permission I'll keep them all, and hand them over to a bazaar to be given next month in the parish close to this. It will be a great help. And your money,—that has been a help to us. We have that, Mr. Trefusis, and I thank you exceedingly for it. We shall have plenty of coal for the poor this winter, at all events."

"But coals aren't enough," says Trefusis.

"They are a great deal, however," says Mr. Gab-

bett, patting his shoulder almost affectionately. This cold, silent young Englishman has grown dear in many ways to the good rector's heart.

Trefusis leaves him, walking thoughtfully away. "If they had been shawls and petticoats!" The rector's words ring in his ears. And is he not Terry's rector, and is this not Terry's village? If those tambourines are useless, as of course they are,—he gives himself a little shrug at his dulness,—surely there must be other things, on some other stalls, that will suit her villagers.

He looks round him and goes straight to a stall on his left. Here some petticoats and shawls are still to be seen, and behind them a gaunt old maid, with a most unmistakable false front and a beaming eye.

That old maid swears by him in all her short future.

Everything still remaining on her stall—things serviceable, but, because of the lack of beauty in them, left there—he buys, without prejudice, without bargaining. The old maid's heart grows light. She had for the past hour felt bitter fears that she should have to carry back these useful but hideous things, that to her had grown beautiful as day by day she toiled over them with knitting-pins and needles. And now this tall young man, with his courteous kindly air, has bought them *all*,—*all*! Not a thing remains, and she will be able to give in her account to Mrs. Adare as one of the very best at this bazaar. Oh, the joy of it!

Tears rise in the poor old maid's eyes, as one by one her homely but useful articles are laid side by side as Trefusis's purchases. Her stall had been somewhat neglected during the day, not being as artistic as those of the others. But now—she looks across at Mrs. Brennan's stall, Mrs. Brennan, whose wares have been held up to admiration all the live-long day, and—we are all wicked, even the best of us—feels a glow of triumph as she sees that some of the exquisitely embroidered cushions are still left unsold, whilst her modest comforters and petticoats have been all pulled down and sold. The opposite stall is still bright and pretty with its wares. Hers is empty and a wreck. Oh, the *delight* in having it a wreck!

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that there has been bad work recently between the old maid and Mrs. Brennan of the embroidered cushions.

Anyway, every shawl and muffler is now lying on the old maid's counter, and Mr. Trefusis is paying for them. Not a wrapper or a child's frock is to be seen. All lie in a huge, soft erection before him.

"In fact, me dear," said the old lady afterwards, with tears in her eyes, and without a thought of impropriety, "when he went away he left me naked!"

Trefusis hires a little boy to carry them all to the rector.

"You are a good fellow, Trefusis," says the rector, as he meets him later on, alluding to those

welcome goods. "You deserve good in turn. I pray God you may meet with it."

Somehow Trefusis knows that the rector is wishing him well with regard to Terry.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now it is all over. Larry and Mr. Kitts, while things are being wound up inside, are amusing themselves by scattering sweets, bought by them off the refreshment table, among the ragged little urchins outside in the street. These naked, handsome little creatures are now having a real good time with their "scrimmies," as they call these wild plungings after the sweetmeats in the open street. Poor little beings!—so ragged that, for the most part, the clothing so desired by the rector would, if distributed among them, be not altogether sufficient; but such happy jolly little beggars! Their roars of laughter resound through the village street.

"There are a few oranges left: let us give them to them," says Terry to Mrs. Adare. Terry is now peering over Larry's shoulder at the joyous turmoil below.

"Yes, let us," says Fanny. "Robbie, bring me those oranges. And, Terry darling, won't you come home with us now?"

"No, I think not. I seem to have been a long time away from the boys, and they don't do their lessons unless—though indeed," anxiously, lovingly, "they are the very best boys. But, Fanny," looking at her cousin a little shyly, "I—I wanted to ask



you, would you all come down and take tea with me and the boys in the garden to-morrow? The—the house,” blushing, “is very shabby, but the garden just now is looking very well, and I thought—I should like—that is——”

“What a lovely idea!” says Fanny. “You may bet upon every one of us. We’ll come in our thousands. And look here, Terry, I’ll send you down a cake or two, eh?”

“No,” says Terry, gently. “I—I should like to do it all myself. I can make cakes, you know, Fanny; and——”

“Oh, I know,—I know, indeed! Such cakes! They make my mouth water already, the very remembrance of them,” says Mrs. Adare, who really is delightful in many ways.

“Then you’ll come. About four. And bring them all,” says Terry.

“Oh, I shan’t have to bring them. They’ll flock to you,” says Fanny, laughing. She kisses her and runs away, and then runs back.

“Terry, look here. You’d better ask Aunt Bridget.”

“Yes, I know. I’ll ask her now,” says Terry, making a faint grimace.

“Now be sure you do,” says Fanny, who has always Terry’s interests at heart.

## CHAPTER XVI.

If all the mountains were of gold,  
And all the seas of wine,  
I'd rather have thee than them all,  
Sweet maiden, treasure mine.

"How ideal! What a little heaven!" sighs the Poet, ecstatically. "A veritable haven of rest in this too, too dreadful world." Here his ecstasies so far overcome him that he sinks into the most comfortable chair on the grass,—the one, too, nearest the rustic tea-table. Ecstasies are astonishingly useful sometimes. "Ah!"—glancing round him at Terry's garden,—“the blessedness of it! The rest! The peace! The knowledge that the great coarse world”—shivering—“is so far away from us!—over there, perhaps,” waving his delicate hand towards the hills that on the east bound their horizon, “behind those silent unbuilt walls of nature.” He glances up at those near him, with what he fondly but erroneously believes to be a pale ethereal smile, and whispers, faintly, “One should *kneel* in a shrine like this!”

“I quite agree with you, my dear fellow,” says Mr. Kitts, who, dressed in great splendor, is evidently bent on making Terry's “at home” a success,—Terry being the heroine of his latest platonic attachment. “Let us all kneel!” he cries, enthu-

siastically, tilting up the Poet's comfortable chair with an evident burst of excitement, and so bringing that æsthetic young man to a standing position, almost before he is aware of it.

"Is metaphor unknown to you?" demands the latter, regarding Kitts with a mournful but at the same time a searching eye. ("A man to be avoided," he decides. "A mere worm?") "In this pale lifeless time it is injudicious to give way to the sweet and free emotions that should sway us. I do not kneel in public," says Mr. Evingley, who is still perhaps sufficiently far from the stars to be able to think of his trousers.

"You forget church, Mr. Evingley," says Miss Bridget, with heavy remonstrance. She has by this time been bowed and smiled by Mr. Kitts into the Poet's vacant chair.

"Memory means slavery!" says the Poet, sadly. He has not looked round him, he has not seen that his chair has been impounded. "And poets——"

"Never, never—never shall be slaves!" says Larry suddenly at the top of his high, jubilant voice.

The effect produced by this outburst is hardly to be exaggerated. The Poet totters backward into the seat he has just vacated, and which he fondly believes to be vacant, right into Miss Bridget's lap. The wild squeal which that maiden gives on receipt of this unexpected burden is not to be surpassed by the shrill scream of the Poet, as, partly propelled by the indignant spinster (Larry always swore after-

wards that she had pinched him), partly through sheer fright, he spirngs upward into the air.

It is all hushed up as quickly as possible, of course, though Miss Bridget is still evidently seething in her own wrath.

"I'm so sorry, dear fellow," says Mr. Kitts, who, I regret to say, is convulsed with laughter, "but as I thought you were really going to kneel, I gave up that comfortable chair to—er—one of the unfair sex. By Jove!" in a low, sympathetic tone, "she has been unfair, you know. I hope," sweetly, "she hasn't hurt you."

"Dear lady! No, she has not hurt me. It was a distress of the moment. No more, no more!" says the Poet, quite beautifully. Mr. Kitts almost admires him. "And as for women, dear friend, pray do not speak of them as unfair. They are always fair. And they have their own little gifts, as you will see, if you go into it,—their pretty charms, their tricks——"

"Like kittens," suggests Mr. Kitts, eagerly, as if dwelling on his thoughts and desirous of following them.

"Yes, yes. You take me, I see," says the Poet, poising himself on one leg and beaming on Kitts, in spite of his decision about him a few minutes ago. But adulation is so sweet, and so hard to get—with some people! "Kittens! Quite so. Little cats! The dearest women have something of the tiger in them, you know. Not to be trusted! Ah!

I have a sweet poem on that idea,—not as yet vulgarized to the paper form, but here—here,” tapping the place where he supposes, poor dear man, that his brains lie. “Women have their own place,” he continues sententiously, unconscious of the fact that Kitts is longing to go for him. “They have their beauty. And if Nature has denied them intellect, poor souls, still their beauty, transient though it is, gives us refreshment as we wander through this gloomy vale.”

“Who’s *us*?” asks Mr. Kitts, with a frown of perplexity. It is a rather dangerous frown.

“Dear friend, surely I need not reply. Why, *we*—the lords of creation,—we, the creatures of intellect. We, who can rule the world with our thoughts, our aspirations, our genius——”

“Do you know,” says Mr. Kitts, surveying him calmly, but straightly, “you’ll get yourself kicked if you go on like that?”

“Eh? What?” says the Poet, as if not able to believe.

“Yes. Kicked. Kicked, I assure you,” says Mr. Kitts, turning on his heel.

Terry is now pouring out the tea, Fanny chatting beside her. Larry is laughing with Miss Anson over some absurd mistake of yesterday, whilst Max and Geoffrey, in their best clothes and manners, and with their stockings very carefully but most unmistakably darned, are handing cakes to everybody.

Trefusis is helping Terry, his heart somewhat

disturbed within him. Terry is looking lovely, quite lovely, poor child, in spite of the shabby old serge gown in which she is dressed; a gown scrupulously neat, but old, so old, and yet—the sting lies here—so undoubtedly her best. There is something of anger in the glance that Trefusis from time to time sends from her to Miss Anson. The latter is so exquisitely frocked; everything is so exactly as it should be, everything so *toned*; it is the very art of dressing! Trefusis feels his soul rebel against the contrast. Why, why will Terry let no one help her? Surely pride can go too far. It hurts him in a strange angry way that she, the girl he has chosen out of all the world, should be one whit behind the very best the world can show.

It is not altogether an ignoble anger; it is an anger, indeed, for her more than for himself,—a sort of jealousy of love. He throws it from him after a bit. Terry, after all, is always Terry. Nothing could improve her. Nothing can perfect perfection. And Terry in her old frock is what Miss Anson, with all Worth's genius at her back (or on it), could never be. And then a quick thought comes to him, and his eyes lighten. There is no need to be impatient. Soon, *soon* she will be his, and she shall walk in such "silk attire" as few have worn.

The Poet is again holding forth, but now to Larry.

"How picturesque it all is!" says he. "And how she suits it!"

"She'd suit anything," says Larry, looking at Terry.

"Yes, she's a picture in herself," says the Poet, laying his head delicately on one side,—the side where he thinks his heart is. "I am glad to find a brother devotee at Miss Anson's shrine."

"Miss Anson! I wasn't thinking of her," says Larry. "Though of course I"—chivalrously—"admire her too. But—er—there's a good deal of her, isn't there?"

"Could there be too much of perfection?" asks the Poet, plaintively.

"I suppose not," says Larry. "But Miss Anson is big, eh?"

"Ah, the charming creature!" cries the Poet. "She is supreme, exquisite. One can take her, as it were, by degrees. She lasts. She lasts."

"Do you mean that you cut her up?" asks Larry. "You should be careful, you know. Women hate being cut up."

"Her eyes yesterday, her lips to-day, her perfect chin to-morrow," goes on the Poet, sighing heavily. "She is a perpetual feast. She is a thing of beauty, as that very much overrated person called Keats once said: pray excuse my quoting him. She has so many charms that one hardly knows how to take them all in at once. She is dear,—very dear!"

"At any price," says Larry to himself, but out loud he says, "You should not let her be. Not now, you know; this is a cheap age. And if you

want her eyes, her lips, and her chin, why, 'reduction made if a quantity taken,' you know, and you like quantity, evidently."

"I fail to understand you," says the Poet, shaking his head.

"Well, I'll explain. *I like quality,*" says Larry, nodding at him with a beaming smile. He adds to his iniquity by going off immediately to where Terry is standing behind the tea-table.

The day is waning. Evening is coming on. Trefusis is still helping Terry with the tea, Mr. Gabbett and his sister having happened to drop in rather late. Terry after a minute or two has moved away. Mr. Kitts is helping the boys to eat the hot cakes. It is quite astonishing how he does it, seeing that he never stops talking all the time.

Trefusis has stooped to whisper some little pleasantry into Terry's ear—some little trifling thing apropos of something going on over there where Miss Bridget is sitting,—and Terry has lifted her flower-like face to his in answer. Almost for the first time her eyes look calmly, steadily, friendly-wise into his. She smiles at him. Trefusis's heart gives a bound. Never has she seemed so near to him as now, in this hour, in this her own home.

Larry, unfortunately (his eyes are never very far from Terry), sees that glance of his, and Terry's answering smile. He turns abruptly away, and grows almost boisterous in his attention to Geraldine Anson. He is evidently telling her a story, vivisect-



ing one of the near neighbors with a view of bringing a laugh to her lips,—in reality to let Terry see that his heart is void of even one touch of pain.

“What is it, Larry?” asks Mrs. Adare, who knows all her brother’s moods and is now very sorry for him. Perhaps she too has seen that little growing towards Trefusis in Terry’s air, and has understood.

“Oh, nothing. Only that old story about the duchess. You remember it? About the night she was playing backgammon at the Mackenzies’, you know.”

He laughs lightly, but falsely, as his sister knows. “If *you* don’t, Terry will,” says he, looking straight at Terry. It seems to him now as if he *must* bring her attention back to himself and away from Trefusis, if only for a moment.

“Yes, I remember,” says Terry, smiling sweetly at him over her teapot.

“I don’t believe it,” says Miss Anson.

“What! That she doesn’t remember?”

“Oh, no, no, no.—Miss O’More, isn’t he silly? Of course she remembers; women always remember—afterwards!” She says this with a strange, swift glance at Trefusis, that seems to warn him of trouble in the future connected with Larry. “I mean that I don’t believe that story of yours.—Your brother,” turning to Mrs. Adare, “says that the duchess was once playing backgammon with Sir Darby Mackenzie, and that she swallowed the dice!”

“One of them. One of them,” says Laurence.

! "She was eating filberts,—she is always eating nuts of one sort or another,—and, the rigor of the game growing too much for her, and finding that Sir Darby was winning, she concluded that one of the dice was a filbert, and swallowed it."

"What a remarkable story!" says Miss Anson. "And—what happened?"

"They had to get a stomach-pump, I believe, and——"

"Laurence!" says Mr. Kitts, fixing him with his eye-glass, "did you ever hear that a thing may go too far?"

"Rather!" says Larry, calmly. "One of those dice went too far, anyway. It was never heard of again."

"He's incorrigible!" says Mrs. Adare, throwing up her hands. "And it wasn't one of the dice, Larry. It was her false tooth."

"Anyway, she frightened old Sir Darby out of his senses."

"You've ruined your tale," says Mrs. Adare. "No one will believe in it now. We all know that for the last twenty years of his life he had no senses to be frightened out of."

"It was wonderful how straight he could keep at times, though, when it suited him."

"When his wife had her eye on him, you mean." Here Mr. Kitts gives way to mirth.

"Do you remember that last time we saw him?—when the English fellow came round on a temper-

ance crusade? He didn't know anything about Sir Darby's propensities, of course, and, thinking the title would sound well on the notices, asked him to take the chair at the meeting in the village. And he came, you know,"—to Miss Anson, who is perhaps the only person present who doesn't know the sorry tale—"a little—just a little—d'ye see? and when he got on his legs to start the show, he—ha! ha!—never got beyond the opening sentence. And what was *that*, d'ye think? 'Ladies an' gemmen, I'm so full of the subjeck——' Ha! ha! ha! he got no farther. He was so full of the subject," roars Mr. Kitts, "that he slipped, and was carried out by the temperance man."

"Oh, was he?" says Miss Anson. She looks perplexed. "And what was the subject?" asks she, curiously. She is certainly terribly English.

At this Mr. Kitts turns away sadly and reproachfully, leaving Larry to explain.

"Whiskey," says that young man, in a cheerful tone.

Providentially at this moment something occurs to change the current of their thoughts. It is the afternoon post: it consists of one letter for Terry, who, letters being very rare with her, seizes upon it, and, after a little glance at Fanny as if to ask permission, tears open the envelope.

## CHAPTER XVII.

I thought that the swallow was wooing already  
Her mate to the nest ;  
I thought that the wild bee with kisses already  
The first rose pressed,  
And that thou wert clasping me, Love, already  
Close to thy breast !

SHE is still reading it, when Max, swooping down upon her from behind, snatches it out of her hand.

"Now," cries he, darting away with it, "you told me yesterday you had no secrets from any one, so I'll read this out loud." He holds up the letter teasingly, as if about to begin.

"*Max !*" cries Terry. There is something so sharp, so agonized, in her tone, that Trefusis starts, and looks at her. Her face ! What a face ! Crimson when first he sees it, and now absolutely colorless, as white as paper, and with something in the eyes that is surely fear.

"Max, give me back my letter," says she, trying to control her voice, but failing. "Max, do you hear?"

She is actually trembling. It is fear, then, that is stirring her ! Trefusis feels suddenly as if everything has given way beneath him. Only a moment ago, and his path had seemed firm, sure ; and now

the earth has suddenly opened. He had never been so sure as in that moment ago. He had told himself that all was coming right with her and him, and now, now, suspicions seem to swarm upon him. What is in this letter to make her look like that?—guilty,—yes, guilty, frightened. Would he have his wife look like that? She is not his wife yet, and his doubts of her are many and various. If, when she was his wife, he saw her look like that——

Larry, happening at this instant to look at him, reads the situation in a glance, and something of contempt enters his heart. He, that cold, cynical fool, to doubt her!

"A love-letter, Terry?" he asks. There is malice in the question,—a sort of mad longing to dig a little dart into Trefusis's soul. Had he thought his idle, mischievous words would cause Terry the very faintest annoyance, it is only fair to him to say that he would have died rather than utter them.

Terry turns her large eyes on his.

"Get it, get it for me!" says she. Larry takes a quick step forward, seizes Max by the neck, and adroitly pulls the letter out of his hand.

"Here it is," says he, holding it out to Terry, whose fingers close over it with a most unmistakable haste. Trefusis moves abruptly away. Whatever this letter means, and it occurs to him that it means nothing, so far as either he or O'More is concerned, still it was to O'More she had turned for help; not to *him*, the man she has promised to marry.

It is another little fillip to the already too great anger that is burning in his bosom. The letter—it was not from him or from O'More; certainly it was then from a third. How many lovers has she? And who is this last one, of whom no word has been uttered up to this?

With an impatience that scorches him, but that he hides so completely beneath the self-control that nothing can ruffle, he waits until the last of Terry's guests have driven away from her door, and then turns to her.

"I want to speak to you," says he, abruptly.

"To speak to me?" The girl stares at him, lost in wonder. What does the cold anger in his face mean? She, once the letter was returned to her, had thought nothing more about it, had not understood that it might be a subject of thought to others. She had been taken up with her guests, and had scarcely had time, even if she had knowledge of it, to take notice of Trefusis's coldness. "You wish to speak to me?"

"Yes," says he, strong displeasure in his tone.

"Well, speak."

"Not here, where we may be interrupted; in the garden."

"Come, then." She takes the initiative, going, indeed, quickly before him, not speaking another word until the sweet precincts of the garden are gained. Here she stops.

"It has always been so peaceful here," says she.

"I have had nothing hateful said to me here to make it sad to me."

"Here or there," says he, remorselessly, "I shall speak to you."

"Come, then," says she. She passes through the pretty hedges, and then stands still.

"You had a letter this afternoon." His air is rather too like the counsel on the other side.

Terry looks at him with great surprise.

"Yes, you know that," says she. His continued gaze, however, mingled with the remembrance of what that letter contained, brings a bright and beautiful flush to her face.

Unlucky blush! It inflames his ire. As if driven to frenzy by it, he turns upon her.

"I may as well say at once what is in my mind," says he, in the slow hold-back sort of way that always incenses her; "it will be better, fairer. I have asked you to marry me, and you have said 'Yes.' You"—looking at her for the first time—"you *have* said yes?"

"Why ask me?" she replies. "There is nothing to contradict. But what has all this got to do with—the letter?"

"Something, surely."

"Nothing, certainly."

"Do you say that? Will you tell me that there was nothing in that letter you did not wish me to see? Me? The man who is to be your husband?"

There is passion in his tone now. Terry's deli-

cate face flushes. She hesitates. What does it all mean? What can she say?

"I——" begins she, faintly. She stops. The stop is fatal.

"Don't be unhappy about it," says he coldly. "You need not answer me. Your face," with a contemptuous smile, "is answer enough. And your agitation when your brother seized that letter,—your fear lest he should betray its contents——"

"Well," says Terry, interrupting him hurriedly, "it was my own letter. Even supposing all you say to be true, that I did not wish you to see it,—still it was my own letter, my own affair. It had nothing to do with you, or any one."

"Nothing to do with me!" His face is as white as death now, his tone quite steady, however. "You think I take things like that?—so easily? Have I no rights, then?—not even the right to wonder at the emotion you showed on receiving a letter from some one who——Not even the right to demand to see that letter?"

"You mean——?"

"I mean," steadily, "that you ought to show it to me."

"You mean that!" Her voice is almost a whisper. "You insist?" says she, faintly. Her manner, that has something of shame in it, maddens him. Shame! Shame in that proud little face!

"Yes. I insist," he declares, coldly, brutally, though his very heart is torn within him.



Slowly, very slowly, the girl draws the letter from her pocket, slowly too withdraws it from its envelope, and, still holding it tightly in her trembling fingers, as though her very life depends upon the keeping of it, looks at him.

"You do insist?" she asks, miserably. It is as though she is craving pity from him. It is plain to him that she would rather die than give up this letter.

Half beside himself with rage and bitter disappointment, he can only see one side of the question,—her evident reluctance to give him the letter. What he cannot see is that she is giving him a last chance to keep and hold her forever.

"I do!" he decides, with icy determination.

"You suspect me, then, of something?" Even to herself, so hurried has all this been, she can hardly place the miseries of this most miserable hour. Of what does he suspect her?

"How can I help it?" His eyes meet hers with a hard glance. He holds out his hand:

"The letter," says he. It is a command.

Terry lays it in his open palm.

To his everlasting dishonor, as he owns to himself afterwards, he opens it, and reads. And as he reads, the very pains of death seem to get hold of him. There is so little to read, but how much it means to her! To have shamed her thus!—and such a sad little guiltless shame,—such a betrayal of all she would have hidden!

His face flushes a dark red, then whitens. He feels as if he cannot lift his eyes from the page before him, as if he dare not meet her eyes. If she had wished for revenge, surely she has it now! His punishment is even greater than his crime.

He crumples the letter convulsively in his hand. But not all the crumpling in the world can shut out from his sight the words that lie within it. They are burned indelibly upon his brain.

*"To one black skirt re-dyed . . . 2s. 6d."*

"You might have told me," says he, hoarsely.

There is no answer. A very storm of hatred against him is shaking the girl's soul. For a while she keeps silence, scarcely daring to let herself speak. She is trembling violently, more perhaps from some sudden inward certainty that here, now, a crisis in her life has arrived, than from the actual circumstance that has led to it. Between him and her all is over,—done! She has borne much,—much,—but not even for the boys can she bear more. A sort of strength arising out of this decision, she speaks.

"Do you think," says she, very slowly, very carefully, as if afraid to let her agitation get the better of her, "any words of mine would have convinced you, would have kept you from distrusting me? You have distrusted me often, Gerrard,"—it is noticeable that this, the hour in which she has decided on a final rejection of him, is the one in which for the first time she has called him by his Christian name,—"*but you have gone too far, at last!*"

"Terry!"

"Don't touch me," says the girl, with so sharp an intonation, so horrified a drawing back from him, that something of the truth is borne in upon him. "I only want to say a few words,—to tell you that I shall never forgive you for having read that letter. I"—lifting now her burning eyes to his—"I was ashamed of it! I"—with passionate honesty—"am ashamed of it! I don't care what people say about there being nothing to be ashamed of in poverty: it is the rich people who say that. I am poor, and I am ashamed!"

"But not—of me?"

"Of you, most of all people!" she declares, bitterly. "I desired you, least of all people, to know how poor I was."

If he had dwelt upon it, this might have given him some little hope; but his mind is beyond control.

"You cannot think that that letter can matter to me," he cries, distractedly, cursing himself at heart for his hideous cruelty.

"I am not thinking of you," she answers, coldly. "To me—to me, it matters!" And then suddenly, without word of warning, she bursts out crying; not loudly, or vehemently, or aggressively, but with a most terrible grief.

She has been mortified, hurt, crushed to her very heart's core.

"For God's sake, Terry, don't go on like that,"

says Trefusis, choking. "On my knees I ask your pardon. You will—you must grant it."

"No." The word is not loudly spoken, but there is finality in it. She checks her sobs by a violent effort, and almost before he has time to recover from the shock her manner has given him, she is gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the privacy of her own room, she tells herself again that, no matter what it may cost her, she will break with him. It will be an ordeal, but it shall be gone through. Fanny will be angry, and Aunt Bridget furious, but nothing, nothing shall alter her decision. She feels, as she paces up and down her large, gaunt, ill-furnished old bedroom, in spite of all the difficulties she will have to undergo, a great uplifting of the spirit, a joy immeasurable, in the thought of flinging back his money in his face,—of letting him see that poverty dire and stern as hers is—and surely he has had proof of it this evening—is preferable to life with him.

No, she was mad when she thought she could sell herself for dross, mere dross!

When he calls next morning, sending up a second time an urgent message to let him see her, if only for two minutes, she still persists in her refusal to go down-stairs, alleging a convenient headache as her reason.

As a fact, a sleepless night has left her overstrung, and she wishes to be at her best and coldest when

giving him his dismissal. She will put it off till to-morrow.

When to-morrow comes, however, she is sorry for this. For to-morrow brings terrible news, that alters the whole tenor of her life. And it would have been better—fairer to herself—if she had spoken to him first.

To-morrow brings the news of Miss Bridget's death.

\* \* \* \* \*

On Friday she had taken tea with Terry and all the others in Terry's garden. On the following Sunday she was found dead in her bed. It had been a death not wholly void of disagreeable details, but these Mrs. Adare keeps from Terry for a long time. The poor woman had evidently had a struggle for her breath at the last, and was found lying half in and half out of the bed, one hand clutching the carpet.

Her will, read a little later on, showed that she had left every penny and every acre she possessed in the world to Terry.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Leave me, simple shepherd, leave me;  
Drag no more a hopeless chain.  
I cannot like, nor would deceive thee:  
Love the maid that loves again.

"If it had been any one but you! You so honest. Are you sure that you know what you are doing?" asks Trefusis, regarding her with a frowning brow.

"Oh, I know all you would say!" cries Terry, with deep agitation; she clasps her hands together with convulsive misery. "All! all! I have been through it myself. I know what I seem to you, but ——" She breaks down.

It is ten days later,—ten days which have been given up to the mourning of Miss Bridget, who wouldn't have given up one hour for the sake of anything in earth or heaven. Terry had been a little glad of these ten days of solitude: they had kept her from seeing Trefusis. And though a lover, in most cases, might be admitted at any time or on any occasion, she ordained it otherwise in her own case. It helped her to put off the evil hour of renunciation for a day or two at least.

But time, like most things, is a failure. There is nothing substantial in it. Conscious of its defects,

no doubt, it flies from us. The ten days have come to an end, and with them Terry's reprieve. To-day—now—she is standing looking at Trefusis, with her breath scant, and her eyes a dream of misery. She has at last laid bare to him her settled determination to end their engagement.

"But what,"—sternly,—“what do you think you seem to me?”

"False and wordly." She turns more directly to him, compelling herself to it with fear and sad misgivings at her heart. He will judge her harshly. But she is acting rightly, well.

However sure she may be of this, she has certainly grown very pale. Trefusis, with cold questioning eyes, can see that she is deeply disturbed. But how beautiful she is through all her sadness and distress! He knows her well enough to understand that this dividing of herself from him is a distress. How sweet she looks,—

White as the sun, fair as the lily!

She has clinched her hands tightly together before going on.

"I know what you think. It is open to all people to think now. That I accepted you when I was poor, and threw you over when I—was no longer poor. I wish—I wish," with almost passionate regret, "that I had said all this to you that evening, when——"

"When I read your letter," he puts in quickly, as if defying her reserve.

"Ah! that letter!"

"But for it, perhaps——"

"No, no!" She lifts her hands. "It would have made no difference, I think. I had often wanted to tell you that I could not marry you. And that letter,—it made an end, nothing more. But what I wish is," her voice vibrating with poignant sorrow, "that I had said all this to you before her death!"

"For how long have you wanted to tell me you could not marry me?" asks Trefusis, in a strange tone.

"I don't know." She presses her hands against her eyes, as if to compel memory, or else to shut him out. "I know nothing as it should be. It is all so strange, so dark. But I do know that I meant to tell you, long before my aunt's death, that I would not marry you. I did!—I did!" she cries, her eyes tearless, but her voice full of weeping. "You do—you *must* believe me!"

He bows his head affirmatively if stiffly.

"But say it!" entreats she, with a vehement gesture.

"Of course I believe you. Do you think I could have loved you as I do, if I did not believe you?" He draws his breath a little sharply. "Now you have it all your own way," says he, "I hope you are satisfied." He stops and smiles at her; a queer smile, filled with many complex thoughts.



"You will be satisfied too," says she, in rather a suffocated tone: he can see that she is crying now.

"You will be rid of me; you will forget me——"

"Probably," coldly. "What I shall not forget, however, is that I was engaged for some weeks to a girl who spent that time wondering how she could in any decent wise put an end to her engagement with me."

"That is taking a very unkind view of it," Terry cries, tremulously, and with a touch of indignation. "The truth, the real truth, is plain to every one. And it places me altogether in the wrong. I should never have accepted you; having accepted you, I should have kept to my word: yet I have failed in both ways. Oh, I know how I shall be regarded by my world. But you—now that all is over between us—might be more generous to me. You"—looking suddenly up at him with sweet drenched eyes—"you must know how I shall be condemned and commented upon by many people, whereas you will go quite free."

"Quite free," bitterly. His tone troubles her.

"Yes. Quite free,—without a backward thought," says she, eagerly. "For you know, you know, you never really loved me. It was a fancy on your part,—a mere passing fancy. But love,—there was no love."

A pause follows this, short but tragical, while they gaze into each other's eyes. Then he catches her by her arms, holding her, reading her, his face

transfigured from its studied calm to passionate anger. She has never seen him show so much emotion before. She had not thought him capable of it. It is a revelation to her.

"A lie! A lie!" says he, between his clinched teeth, "and you know it." Suddenly he flings her from him. "Pah! you are not worth remembering!" says he.

\* \* \* \* \*

On his way home through the park he meets Geraldine Anson. His brain still on fire, he has not time to conceal the anger that is consuming him, when a sudden turn in the woodland path brings him face to face with her. He would have hurried by her with a slight recognition, but she stops him. There is wonder, gratified revenge, hope, in her expression, as she puts out her hand to check him.

"Something has happened," says she, breathlessly. "She has thrown you over? It is at an end, that engagement?"

He bows his head.

"It is as well that every one should know it, as soon as possible," says he, making an effort to speak as usual, but failing.

"What!" cries Miss Anson. She breaks into a little low, strained laugh. "She has flung you aside now,—now, when her future is safe without you. I knew she would do that. But so soon! Has she no decency, no sense of delicacy? She used you as a prop until she got a stronger staff, then flung you

remorselessly aside. Was that fair dealing? Was that honesty?"

"I never met any one so honest," says Trefusis, a dull flush mounting to his brow.

"*Honest!* Oh!" sharply, as if angered beyond control by his answer. "One can be *too* generous. And to her,—to one who has treated you so treacherously! What did I tell you when first you were engaged to her? Do you remember? Did I not warn you that she was clever?—too clever?"

"It is you who are too clever," says Trefusis, with some suppression. "You fail to understand her."

"Too dull, I suppose you mean," with heavy asperity. "I confess I do not aspire to such cleverness as hers. If you wish me to think that you still regard Miss O'More with admiration,—that you call her worthy of——"

"I call her nothing," impatiently. He hesitates, and then goes on quickly, "except the sweetest, the loveliest, the most desirable girl I have ever met."

"Your acquaintance with desirable girls must be limited," says Miss Anson, quietly, but with a certain down-drawing of her lips. "*I* call her a jilt."

"I hope you will not." Trefusis turns to her; his whole manner has undergone a change. There is extreme anxiety in it now. "We have been friends, surely," says he,—"*friends* now for three years. For the sake of that friendship I ask you to abstain from hard words towards Miss O'More."

"You would spare her," says she, frowning.

"And myself too. After all, she is nothing now to me; nothing in the world, and never will be. Of your goodness be good to her. I am going away. I shall——"

"Going away?" There is open concern on her face now. "Where?"

"Where do all rejected swains go?" he asks, laughing: it is a rather dreary laugh. "To the Rocky Mountains, isn't it? Perhaps I shall go there. And if not, somewhere else."

"I shall hear of you?" she asks, as he moves past her with a kindly nod.

"Yes, you shall hear."

## CHAPTER XIX.

Then be not coy, but use your time,  
And, while ye may, go marry ;  
For having lost but once your prime,  
You may forever tarry.

It seems impossible, she tells herself, yet only a week has elapsed after the going of Trefusis before Terry knows that she misses him.

At first—the first day or two, that is—there was a high sense of relief; a feeling of liberty regained, of self-dependence restored. But the third day shattered all that.

Its morning broke dull and cheerless. Rain was falling. From the ivy branches the drip-drip-drip of the rain-drops could be heard continuously all the day. Terry, rising from breakfast, wandered idly to the drawing-room. There, or in the garden, Trefusis used to come to her every morning. There was no one to come to-day.

She thought his visits an intrusion then, while he was still in the country; determination had made her think them so; but when those visits were forever at an end, the morning felt very long. There was such an odd, strange feeling about everything,—such a blank!

She walked from room to room restlessly. The

news that he was gone had been conveyed to her by Fanny, in a letter. Fanny had disdained to bring the news, by which Terry knew that she was terribly angry with her. But Terry was so angry on a small account of her own that she passed over Fanny's unjust indignation very lightly.

Why had he gone thus, suddenly, without another word, then, when all was reversed between them,—when she was no longer the beggar-maid?

How long the day was! Yet it ought to be a festival with her. She was now rid forever of the visits she used to dread,—of the voice, the step. And yet——

He had played the lord over her, no doubt, until she had told herself that she hated him. But that was all over, and *her* chance should have been given her. She would have liked to play the lady over him for a little,—if that could be done without the hateful tie of engagement.

But he was gone. Fanny's letter had told her that yesterday. He had gone away the morning after her final rejection of him. He could not have gone a moment earlier. He was glad of his escape, the girl told herself with a queer laugh. Thus ended that third day.

\* \* \* \* \*

This day is charming. A last taste of summer pervades it. It is a week later, and Mr. Trefusis's going has become a thing of the past. Terry, leaning over the old balustrades of the balcony, looks

to the south, where the light-blue clouds are blowing, and whence the stir of the sea can be heard. Larry, who is beside her, touches her arm, as if to bring her back from fairy-land, or whatever land it may be to which her thoughts have wandered.

"Yes?" says she, turning to him, her eyes a little vague.

"I wish you would try to help a fellow," says Larry, in an aggrieved tone.

"Help you? Of course I'll help you in any way I can."

"Come down from the clouds, then," says he, jealously.

"Oh, clouds!" says she, laughing, a little uncertainly perhaps. "Well, I'm down now: what can I do for you?"

"You can marry me!" says Larry, promptly, brilliantly. It is a tribute to his innate honesty that it never for one moment occurs to him that he ought not to ask her to marry him now, because of the money she has just come into. To Terry also it must be allowed that not one base thought of her cousin on this subject helps her to her decision.

She looks at him sadly.

"Well, *will* you marry me?" he asks.

"No. Larry, don't be angry with me. Every one"—pathetically—"is angry with me now, I think. But you won't be, will you? I couldn't marry you. I don't love you that way. I couldn't, indeed!"

"I believe you are in love with that confounded prig after all, in spite of your sending him away," says Larry, violently. "You have been moping for the last week ; not a word for any one. Just look at your face."

Indeed, her face is a study. A deep blush has dyed it. So vivid, so painful is this rush of color that it brings tears to her eyes. All at once she knows that she is trembling. What had Larry said to make her feel like this, and why should it touch her so? It is false!—false! There is no truth in it. Yet it is only by a determined effort that she keeps herself from bursting into tears.

"You are rude," she says, with a calmness that costs her a good deal. "If I blush, it is for you, —your manner,—the way you speak. It is better to say the last word at once, Larry. I shall never marry you ; never. I"—tremulously—"would rather be an old maid forever than marry you."

"You won't say that when you are an old maid ; and I'll wait till then," says the devoted Larry.

Terry bursts into uncontrollable laughter.

Our sweetest laughter with some pain is fraught,

sang one not to be surpassed, some years ago ; and, indeed, Terry's mirth is full of unshed tears.

"Ah, don't!" says she. "It will be no use ; and look at my nose, Larry. I shall be a hideous old maid!"



"Oh, I'll wait," says he. "I'll chance the nose!"  
At this they both laugh.

\* \* \* \* \*

Eight months have gone by, and once more sweet April is with us. The trees are all alive; each bush and shrub is casting forth its greenery.

Of Spring that breaks with all her leaves,  
Of birds that build in thatch and eaves,  
Of woodlands where the throstle calls,  
Of girls that gather cowslip balls,

there are enough and to spare. Terry, stepping into the sweet up-bursting garden, stands still, as if to take in all the delights around her. From a corner of the old orchard beyond, a stray wind has blown some blossoms on her head.

"Ah, it is sweet, sweet!" She sighs and throws out her arms pensively. The winter is over,—the long, long winter.

She is glad to think of it as buried, dead. It was so terribly long, and so singularly dull, so inexpressibly dreary. Fanny had gone abroad, Fanny, who had been so cold to her, so almost unkind. Just at the very last she had relented, and had asked Terry to go with her to Florence, but Terry had refused.

There were the boys, she said. But the boys had not helped her to bear the dulness. Max had been sent to a grinder, preparatory to his entering college, and Geoffrey, with many tears on both sides, had

gone to a good school at a great distance. So that, after all, the boys did not count. The winter had been almost too lonely for endurance.

She had had no one to keep her company during the long cold nights. And sometimes, in her solitary sittings over the fire, she had thought of Trefusis. Her mind had gone after him a good deal when first he left her, and then had grown stagnant; but these sad silent evenings, when even the boys were away, compelled her to think of him again. Over and over her brain travelled across the road that had had him as a passenger.

It was spring then too, and certainly he had made a little break in the monotony of her life. She acknowledged so much to her unwilling heart, and more than that. He had loved her! In the solitude of the winter she had learned to believe so much. Yes, he had loved her, in his own way,—a high and mighty way, no doubt,—but there was love in it, love all through it, for all that.

Here—to-day—this thought recurs to her again.

A pattering of feet behind her brings her to sudden calm. She turns.

“Fanny!” she cries.

“Here I am!” declares Fanny, most superfluously, flinging herself into Terry’s arms.

“You are back! you are home!” says Terry, clinging to her convulsively. Oh, how sweet it is to see her again, to know that some human thing, in sympathy with her, is within a mile or so of her!

"Came last night," gasps Fanny, holding her back and shaking her lovingly. "Silly baby, not to come with me! But I'm back, anyway, and Terry, darling,"—with the fondest air,—"so glad to see you again. How sweet you look! How sweet your garden looks!—how sweet it all is!"

"You especially," says Terry, catching her and kissing her again.

"Oh, get away, flatterer."

"When did you come?"

"A moment ago."

"No!"

"Well, half an hour ago. and ran down to see you first thing."

"Oh, Fanny!"

"Yes, you ought to be conceited over it. But," slowing off a little, "the fact is, Terry, I ought to let you know at once that—Gerrard is with us."

"Mr. Trefusis!"

"Yes, Gerrard. He would come. I tried all I could to prevent him, but you know Robbie! He's *such* a fool. But I suppose it won't matter much, darling, will it? As you are so indifferent to him——"

"And he so indifferent to me," says Terry, smiling.

"Oh, as for that, quite, I think. He talks of you in the most usual manner. He has quite got over that, I think, so you need not be worried about it in any way. And you'll come up to dinner to-

night, won't you? Better get over it at once, you know, especially as he is going to stay here for a month."

"Certainly I shall come," says Terry. She feels quite unconcerned, quite calm and composed. She had thought she would have felt a kind of nervousness at meeting him again; she had even once or twice imagined it possible that she had liked him more than she had known; but this sudden news of Fanny's has dispelled all those hallucinations. It would be impossible to feel as unconcerned as she does at this moment, if there had been a sparkle of regret in her heart.

"That's settled, then," says Mrs. Adare. She lays her hands on the girl's shoulders. "You are looking pale," says she, "but, as I have always maintained, you are the most beautiful girl in the world. There, I must go," giving her a friendly pat. "I know I am bad for your morals. Half-past seven, mind."

## CHAPTER XX.

Her speech would have betrayed  
Her thought, had mine been colder;  
Her eyes' distress had made  
A lesser lover bolder.

IF Terry had been pale when Fanny spoke to her in the morning, she is still paler now, white as the white gown she wears, as she advances up the drawing-room of The Hall to meet the hostess, who hurries to greet her.

Every one is here, and though all the lamps are delicately shaded, still there is enough light to let her perfectly be seen. To her, indeed, the room seems inordinately bright. Her pallor, however, is the only sign of emotion she betrays. She returns Fanny's welcoming words, slowly, prettily, with a smile on her charming lips.

She had seen Trefusis the moment she entered the room. He was sitting next Miss Anson, and Terry was conscious that the latter bent towards him and whispered something hurriedly to him as she came in.

He has now risen, and is coming towards her, holding out his hand, and smiling pleasantly. There is not a touch of nervousness about him. He seems

quite honestly glad to see her, telling her so in the friendliest, easiest way.

Truly Fanny had been right. He *has* got over all that!

One thing only in his manner strikes her as strange, as apart from the ordinary manner of a mere friend who meets one after a long absence. Undoubtedly his gaze at her has been prolonged, scrutinizing, as if he would read her. This perhaps more than all else hardens her, and gives her courage, putting her on her mettle.

She smiles back at him in a leisurely way.

"I heard you had gone to the Rocky Mountains," says she.

"Not quite so far."

"I am glad of it. It brings you here again sooner than we hoped for."

If he had looked for agitation in her, he is certainly disappointed. She is regarding him with a soft but steady gaze. There is even perhaps a suspicion of laughter in her eyes. She is altogether composed. She is even beginning to wonder at herself. After all, perhaps there was not so much to be afraid of; and of course there is always a good deal of moral support to be got out of the remembrance that it was she who had given him his dismissal.

There is a good deal of moral support to be got out of a well-made gown also; and Terry had taken great care with her toilette for this evening. She

is exquisitely if simply dressed. The white silk of her gown clings closely to her slender figure, and is charmingly arranged, with little touches of priceless lace about it here and there, round the short sleeves and the soft girlish neck. Old Miss Bridget had left many desirable things behind her, and the single row of pearls that clasps Terry's throat is worthy of mention. There is a pearl pin or two also in the nut-brown tresses of her hair. Her hands, as she talks to him, are toying lightly with a large white feather fan.

Her eyes gleam at Trefusis between the long dark lashes that fall so persistently, making the short glimpses of the eyes all the more precious :

And when the Knight saw verily all this,  
That she so fair was, and so young thereto,—

why, he left her and went back to his seat on the lounge next to Miss Anson.

It was most naturally done, of course. Mr. Kitts had come up to speak to Terry, to renew acquaintance with this pretty creature who has grown so much prettier during this past year; and Trefusis had slipped away under cover of his approach, back to Geraldine, who gives him a broad glad smile of welcome.

Terry is still standing in the middle of the room, the centre of attraction, a gay, happy, lovely thing—apparently.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dinner has gone off brilliantly, without a single check. Both Terry and Trefusis have been at their best. There is rather a large house-party, and every one has seemed exceptionally gay,—especially Mr. Kitts, who is dressed in the very latest fashion with regard to ties, and is altogether “a beaming youth of glory.”

The drawing-room, even thus early in the lovely May, is warm and sweet, and the fire burning in the grate drives Terry to the balcony outside. The windows have been thrown quite wide to admit the air and the pale glimpses of the moon in the dark heavens above. There is still time to stand here and let the soft night air cool her burning forehead before the men come in. She leans over the railings and gazes into the night.

“All alone?” asks somebody in the airiest tone. He falls into a lounging attitude beside her, resting his own arms on the railings close to hers.

“Yes; it was so warm in there that I came out,” says Terry. Her tone is of the friendly indifferent kind. “The others were afraid to venture.”

“And you?”

“I am afraid of nothing.”

Trefusis looks at her persistently for a moment, then he laughs.

“I ought to know that,” says he. “You aren’t even afraid of behaving badly to people.” He pauses. Then, “How long ago it all seems, doesn’t it?” There is distinct amusement in his tone.



"It?"

"Since you so unkindly gave me my *congé*!"

"Oh, no! It seems like yesterday," says Terry, laughing too, and very naturally. "And you mustn't call that behaving badly. It was the wisest thing I ever did in my life. You must see that. You were angry with me then. Do you remember," turning suddenly and looking full into his face, "how *ridiculously* angry you were? But now—now you acknowledge my wisdom."

"You were always wonderfully wise. You have not even married your cousin," says he.

Terry's fingers close with a tight pressure upon the iron railings. After a moment she turns to him.

"You are changed," says she, slowly.

"Thank Heaven!"

"Why?"

"Why not? You at least ought to be thankful, considering how distasteful I was to you in those old days. But never mind that; let us go back to what we were talking about just now. I like going back. Don't you?"

"I love it!" says Terry, with enthusiasm.

He looks at her curiously again. She has accused him of being changed: what of her?

"Then we'll take a walk into the dark ages, and perhaps you will tell me, as we go, where your wisdom lay in"—cheerfully—"consigning me to misery for life."

"Oh, as for that! However, for one thing, I believe you expected me to obey you."

"No! did I, really? What a confounded prig I must have been!"

"That is too hard a word."

"Is it? What is the right one, then?"

"Well, perhaps tyrant."

He looks amused. "Is that softer?"

"Oh, ever so much."

"I'll take your word for it. And so I was a tyrant? A prig? Do you know, I'm sure of it. But I've reformed all that. You gave me my lesson, you see. I owe you more than I can say, in many ways. Not to believe in my own judgment, for example; or to fancy myself so much; or to have faith in a woman's word."

Terry raises herself.

"Don't stir," says he, laughing. "Why, that is the greatest good of all that you have done me. It is, really. I was a fool that time. I should have seen that I was the last man in the world to please you, and that you were the honestest creature on earth, to break your word before it was too late. I," laughing, "am awfully obliged to you! Fancy how I should have reproached myself if I had ruined your life. You saved me from that!"

"I saved you from more than that,—from ruining your own life," says Terry, quietly.

"That's nothing, nothing at all. It was your life was the thing. You see I am not so tyrannical as

I was: And so you think I expected you to obey me?"

"Quite that, if not more. I think you expected me to bow down to you."

"I expected in vain, then. I don't believe I ever got my own way with you."

"Always! Always!" says she, gayly.

"Not always, certainly."

"Yes, every time. You ordered me about and scolded me, and I bore it all most beautifully until I could bear it no longer." She is looking at him and laughing, as if at some good old joke.

"And do you mean to say that you never ordered me about?"

"I? Never! Why," making a charming frightened little movement with her hands, "I should not have dared!"

"You dared to order me about my business once, at all events," says Trefusis, shaking his head at her with mock severity. "You can't have forgotten it. The day you sent me home like a whipped school-boy. You have not forgotten?"

"Ah, that last day." She colors brilliantly in spite of herself. "Well, but that was only one day out of your many."

"Still, I never sent you home!" Here they both laugh. "That's one to me. And I believe if I had sent you, you wouldn't have gone. So that makes two to me. I obeyed you to the end. I went straight home."

"I believe you were very glad to go," says she, involuntarily. The moment the words are said she would have given a good deal to get them back again, but that is impossible. There is so much meaning in them; they almost convey a question, a challenge. The warm flush of a while since now deepens into a burning blush. The knowledge that he is looking at her gives her a little feeling of suffocation. "I told you I was wise. I proved it in dismissing you that day," she goes on, hurriedly, her smile a little strained. "You," glancing at him defiantly, "must acknowledge that."

"Wise, for yourself?"

"For you too."

"That is true," he says, thoughtfully. "It was the wisest thing you could have done for me certainly."

"For us both!" drawing back a little and letting something of the old imperious light flash into her eyes.

"I don't know about that," he says, audaciously. "I should have made you an excellent husband, whereas you were bound to make me a most indifferent wife."

"Surely you are going a little far," says Terry, haughtily.

"Well, you did not love me, you know, so I certainly should have had the worst of the bargain."

"It would never have been a bargain accomplished," says Terry, "so we need not discuss it."

I know now that I tried you greatly in many ways."

She pauses, as if for a contradiction, perhaps.

"You certainly were a little trying," says Trefusis, mildly.

She suppresses a slight angry movement of her hand.

"You see," she says, quickly, "if I had not taken the initiative,—if I had not given you your liberty,—you would have given me mine a little later."

She is looking at him: she has grown a little breathless.

"Well, of course, if I had seen it was for your good——" he returns, calmly, critically.

This is intolerable. Terry goes back to her old position, leaning upon the railing of the balcony: though she would have scorned to acknowledge that she is glad of its support, still she knows that she requires it. Indignation, indeed, has seized hold of her.

"Well, I'm glad I was the first," she says, it must be confessed, a little vindictively.

"You were sure to be that," somewhat slowly. If there is any meaning in his words she is too angry to dwell upon it. "And of course I am grateful to you. By your own showing, you have saved us both from a terrible fate. I have," pleasantly, "much to thank you for."

"You certainly do not shrink from the acknowledgment of your debt," coldly. She is standing

up, and has moved as if to go back to the drawing-room. Is there pique in her tone? For a second she is conscious of being subjected once again to that strange penetrating gaze that had troubled her on her meeting with him to-night.

“Why should I?”

“Yes, yes,” interrupting him impatiently. “Do not let us have any more discussions. The past is past; over; done.”

“That of course. But—one moment. We are friends, I hope?”

She looks back at him over her shoulder.

“You always hoped so much,” says she. “Were we ever friends?”

She waits deliberately for an answer.

Trefusis shrugs his shoulders. “You are always right,” returns he. “I am afraid the answer must be, Never; but we might begin——”

There is something so indifferent, so mocking, in his tone, that Terry, turning abruptly away from him, steps into the lighted room beyond.

## CHAPTER XXI.

I do not think a braver gentleman,  
More active valiant, or more valiant young,  
More daring or more bold, is now alive  
To grace this latter age with noble deeds.

"HE's a brute!" says Larry.

The "brute" is being led up and down by a groom before the hall door, on the steps of which all the guests of The Hall are standing.

The beautiful horse, saddled and bridled, has just been brought back from a morning canter,—or a canter supposed to be taken, in which his rider has felt the earth many times, but no canter. He is a perfect picture as he stands there, with a little foam about the bit, standing immovable, quiet, nothing but the foam to betray temper of any sort, except perhaps the excessive whiteness of the eyes.

"You'll never get a day's good out of him," continues Larry, addressing Adare.

"Yet what a handsome creature!" says Trefusis, who is smoking a cigarette and talking to Fanny. Mr. Kitts on their right hand is carrying on a light skirmishing attack with Terry.

"Oh, yes, handsome, but useless. 'Handsome is as handsome does;' and his temper is unbearable.

He's a perfect devil. Not one of the grooms can ride him."

"I don't think much of grooms," says Trefusis. "Not for temper, I mean. They've courage enough, as a rule, but they're impatient. Is it only the grooms?"

"And enough, too, I think," says Terry, coming forward, having been severely vanquished by Mr. Kitts. "But it isn't only the grooms. Larry tried to ride him last week,—just the day before you came home, Fanny," turning to her cousin,—“and he was thrown. Larry, who can ride anything!"

Trefusis flings his cigarette into a bush close by.

"Larry, who has all the virtues!" says he, glancing at her with a smile. It is now ten days since he came back to Ireland, and any little friction or embarrassment between them that might at first have been felt has quite died away. Terry has been constantly at The Hall, is now staying there, indeed, but, whether by chance or design,—she has a vague belief in the design,—Trefusis very seldom comes near her. "And so Larry can ride anything!"

He moves away from her to where Adare is examining a girth on the "brute," who is now standing as impassive as if vice and he were strangers.

"I don't believe him so vicious as you all say," says he. "I believe," slowly, "I could conquer him. Give me a try, Adare, will you?"

"My dear fellow, why? He's sure to do you some injury, even if you do get the upper hand."



"Nothing is sure," says Trefusis. "And I've rather set my mind on taking him for a gallop over those fields below there." He points to where beyond the tennis-courts a splendid lawn lies, with a field beyond that again.

"Well, you're not a novice, as we all know," says Adare. "But do look out for yourself. I assure you, as far as I can learn, O'More got a nasty fall with her the other day."

"I'll take care," says Trefusis. He goes nearer, and prepares to mount, the groom holding the horse's head.

A hand is laid upon his arm. He turns, to find Terry beside him. Her face is very pale. She has been hardly conscious of this extreme step that she has taken, until she meets the deep surprise within his eyes.

"Don't!" says she. It is impossible to retreat now: she must go on.

"Don't what?"

"Don't ride that horse. I"—brokenly, confusedly—"you must not think—— It is only that I cannot bear to see any one hurt. But he hurt Larry; and Larry has been riding all his life; he is accustomed to horses——"

"And I—am not?"

He laughs aloud, pushes her hand rather abruptly from him, and springs into the saddle. That allusion to Larry has irritated him.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is a hideous struggle.

On first mounting, the horse had refused to move, standing there with his forefeet thrust out and firmly planted in the ground, his ears lying close to his neck. Then suddenly, without a second's warning, he had bolted.

Nobody had been frightened until then. That unexpected and vicious spring forward would have unseated most riders, but Trefusis kept his seat. As the brute swung round, he swung with him, and had a good hand on the rein, as he went wildly forward.

Like a flash of lightning the horse tore past those standing on the hall door steps, dashing onward towards the lawn below.

A lawn, of course, is as delightful a spot as one can meet with on which to try a conclusion with a nasty-tempered horse; but, unfortunately, Adare's lawn, as I have already stated, has a field lying beyond it,—a field divided from the great broad lovely lawn by a ha-ha. Down there on the right side of this ha-ha a light wire railing about forty yards in length and one yard in height had been erected, to mark it dangerous,—just to prevent people from jumping it, as the ha-ha has been sunk much lower upon the other side of it than on the part above it.

It is towards this spot, marked dangerous, that the now infuriated animal is dashing, with its head between its forefeet, and every sinew strung.

“Great heavens! I hope he will be able to turn

him," says Adare, under his breath. He has changed color: he steps back a bit, and frowns nervously.

It is clear, however, to them all that Trefusis has no longer the slightest control over the animal he is riding. He is sitting him firmly enough, and is apparently doing all he can to turn him aside, without avail. There is always little or nothing to be done with a runaway.

Nearer, ever nearer, rush the horse and rider to that fateful spot in the ha-ha. Now they are almost at it. Now——

Fanny bursts into tears. Miss Anson covers her face with her hands. Terry, with her arms cast backward and her fingers claspings convulsively the chair behind her, is leaning forward, her face like marble, her eyes wide.

She is rigid, tense; her gaze is fixed immovably upon the tragic scene below.

Now indeed the tragedy is at its height. The horse has reached the wire railing, has risen to it, has cleared it badly, and has come with a sickening crash to the ground at the other side.

"Robbie! Robbie!" cries Mrs. Adare, wildly, "you should not have let him do it."

"My God! what a time to reproach a man!" says Adare, with a terrible glance at her. But even as he starts forward, the other men following him, they see Trefusis stagger to his feet, seize the reins, —the horse has already risen, and is standing

shivering next him,—and fling himself once more into the saddle.

A wild cheer bursts from those watching him.

“Oh, he is hurt!” says Terry, faintly. She drops into a chair. A wave of sickness passes over her. What is his pluck, or anything, to her, beside that thin line of blood running down his cheek?

They all see it now, that ugly stain, stealing from his forehead to his chin. But Trefusis himself appears either ignorant of it or indifferent to it. He has the brute well in hand now, and this time the victory seems to the man. The lower field makes a capital course on a small scale, and round it he takes him and then turns him towards the house and thus up and over the ha-ha and past the group on the edges of the lawn, who cry to him in vain to stop. No power on earth would have stopped him then. Those looking on never quite forgot his face,—pale, with that streak of blood upon it, and his eyes flashing. If he never looked handsome before, he looks handsomer now than most men, and a thrill of pride in him, that she does not dare define, runs through Terry’s heart. It is horrible, the way he is flogging the brute, she thinks; but she understands that, and how he feels.

And now he has torn past them, down the lawn again, and has taken the horse over the ha-ha once more, but this time at his own pace and pleasure. And so on, until he comes to them once more, and drops from his saddle to the ground, smiling; but

breathing with a little difficulty. It had been a battle, but he had won. The now thoroughly cowed creature stands trembling in every limb, and almost sobbing, beside him.

"Sell him!" says he to Adare, as a groom leads the horse away. "I know his kind. I had a horse like that once. I conquered him too, but I found he required reconquering once a week. It wasn't good enough. It was too fatiguing."

"By Jove! I never saw such riding," says Larry, with honest admiration. Whatever else may be laid to Larry's charge, it can certainly never be the want of generosity.

"He hasn't got any mouth," says Trefusis. He has glanced at Larry, as if curiously, first, and then has given him a friendly but deprecating shake of the head. "Sell him for anything you can get for him."

"I'd like to shoot him!" says Adare, wrathfully. "Here, come in and have a whiskey-and-soda. You must be dead beat."

"A little shaken, I confess. The beast fell so stupidly. I'm afraid," dabbing his face with his handkerchief, "I'm rather a spectacle, but it is a mere graze. I feel nothing but my arm. That's a bit stiff."

"Well, come in and bathe it," entreats his host, anxiously.

As he goes, he passes by Terry, still sitting in that garden-chair and still very pale. He stops before her.

"Well, I can do one thing as well as your cousin?" he says. There is undisguised triumph in his tone. It is open, flagrant. He seems, indeed, to glory in it. There seems to be no shame about him.

"Better," says Terry, slowly, and then, "But he would never have said that. He would have been too generous."

"He is perfection, I know. But you should remember that he can afford to be generous."

"He? Poor Laurence! What has he?"

"Your friendship, at all events." There is an emphasis on the word.

"That certainly," calmly.

At this moment Miss Anson lays her hand upon his arm.

"You must come. You must, really," says she, with great agitation.—"Miss O'More, oh, don't keep him. He must be in such pain. They tell me his arm has to be looked to at once. Heroes"—with a beatific smile at him—"never acknowledge pain, I know. And you——" There is a delicate appreciative pause.

Trefusis spoils it. He moves past her, politely, but indifferently.

"Look here, Adare!" he cries, "have you got a cigar about you?"

Mr. Kitts, who as a rule is always listening to what is not intended for him, here gives way to mirth. That is, he gets behind a big laurel shrub planted in a tub and laughs silently but heartily for

a full minute. Larry, who has followed him very kindly into his exile, under the mistaken impression that he is going into a fit, now stares at him as if he is the eighth wonder. Mr. Kitts restrains himself sufficiently to say, "One in the eye for her, old boy, eh?"

After which Larry leaves him, not without a sense of indignation.

## CHAPTER XXII.

O watcher on the minster hill,  
Look out o'er the sloping sea ;  
Of the tall ships coming, coming still,  
Is never a one for me ?  
I have waited and watched the weary years  
When I to the shore could win,  
Till now I cannot see for tears  
If my ship be coming in.

"So you are not really hurt, then?" says Terry, as Trefusis, crossing the room, seats himself on the ottoman beside her.

Dinner is over, and the men have just come into the drawing-room. Terry had been specially bright and charming all through it, though Trefusis had known by her eyes that she had been crying. It gave him a cruel satisfaction. He has not yet forgotten—he knows he will never forget—the dull stinging pain that filled the months following on her dismissal of him.

"Not fatally," he answers, with a touch of irony. "I dare say with time and attention I shall recover. I hope," looking at her, "you will be attentive to me. You ought, you know, if only for old times' sake."

He seems entirely gay over the "old times," utterly callous to the memory of them. It annoys Terry bitterly, his constant harping upon this theme,



and the manner in which he watches her as he lets fall each jesting allusion to it. What does he want, or expect, to see in her face?

She stoops now to pick up her handkerchief.

"I was so afraid your arm was broken," says she, calmly, putting his last speech aside, as it were.

"So was I. A good thing it wasn't, as Mrs. Adare has ordered us to dance to-night."

Fanny indeed has invited a few of the younger neighbors to come in for a small and early affair this evening. It is now a few minutes past nine, and already the door has opened to admit a little "maiden of bashful fifteen" and her brother.

"It is too early to dance yet," says Trefusis. He rises hurriedly and holds out his hand to Terry. "Let us escape while we can," says he. The window is open behind them, and in a moment they are standing on the balcony.

A pale faint moon is lying upon a paler sky. Here and there a star is glimmering, and from the tangle in the shrubberies beyond the warm sweet scent of honeysuckle comes to them on a little vagrant breeze. It is such a white, white night that one can hardly yet believe the day to be quite gone, so clear lie the paths running along below them, so pink and blushing red the blossoms of the drowsy roses. Yet

Yon gilded sickle of the new-made moon,  
Leading the pale lamp of the evening star,

proclaims it night.

Terry, in her gown of soft pink crêpe, seems in unison with the hour. Her neck is gleaming snowy white in this pale radiance, her eyes are shining like the stars above her. She is standing, looking down at the colored sweetness of the rose-garden beneath, and her arms, happily guiltless of any covering, are hanging with the fingers loosely clasped before her. Sweet arms, so young, so delicate. She is not conscious of Trefusis's gaze this time, a gaze of mingled anger and determination. It is a very searching gaze.

The girl is startled back from her quick eager appreciation of the beauties of the night, by his voice.

"What were you crying about?" he asks. His tone is blunt, almost rude.

"Crying?" She blushes crimson, and her brow darkens a little.

"Yes, crying," immovably. "You had been crying before you came down to dinner."

"How do you know that?" she asks. He looks at her for a moment,—it is a strange look,—and then he laughs.

"What! you can't even lie about that!" says he. "Why should I not know how you look when you have been crying? If there was ever an authority on that subject, it is I. You," with an amused air, "were always crying more or less last summer. That was the exhilarating effect your engagement with me had on you."

"Well, I am not engaged to you now," says Terry, with spirit. "And yet you say I was crying."

"I do. And," he pauses, "and"—slowly—"because of me again."

"Why should I deny it?" says Terry, smiling, though her heart is beating. "I was frightened. That horrible fall you got unnerved me. I hate scenes, so I went up-stairs and had," laughing, "*my* scene in my own room. I remembered how I cried over a poor man who got a bad fall at the water jump at the Cork Park races two years ago, and was determined not to make myself so unpleasant again before people."

Her manner is quite natural; the little tremor in her voice as she began is now quite gone. She looks straight into his eyes; he looks back at her as impassively as ever, yet he seems, for once, at fault.

"As to my crying all the time I was engaged to you," Terry goes on, gayly, "that only shows how right I was to put a stop to that ridiculous arrangement. We were (as you have said yourself) the last people in the world to suit each other, you and I."

"You were the first to find that out."

"Naturally," she says, saucily. "Women are always cleverer than men at things of that sort. You know you would always have given yourself the airs of a Cophetua."

"Did he give himself airs? History, I think, is dark on the subsequent affairs of that immortal man."

"No matter. You would have given yourself airs, certainly."

"Should I?" He looks thoughtfully upon the ground. "Well, perhaps I should."

"You know you are very masterful. Yes, you are. Think of that horse to-day."

"Am I?" meekly. "Well, perhaps I am."

"It is even likely that some time or other you would have reminded me of the fact that you had married me without a penny."

Here Trefusis flings up his head.

"*Never!*" says he, impulsively. "I should never have done that." He flushes a dark red.

"Wouldn't you? Well, perhaps you wouldn't," murmurs she, with such an exact imitation of his own tone that they both burst out laughing.

"Well, but you see you aren't now 'the beggar-maid,'" says he.

He says this and then stops. Terry's heart almost stops too. What does he mean? What is he going to say? Again she knows that his eyes are on her, reading her and gloating no doubt over the fact that she has become as white as death. She struggles with herself, and by an effort faces him, her lovely eyes filled with some strange fear, her voice a little low, but her lips smiling.

"That spoils the story," says she, "if a story

could be made out of it ; but I'm afraid we are not in sympathy enough for that."

"Still, we *have* made a story," says he, quickly.

"True, but such a poor one, a bare half-volume, with a silly beginning and no end."

"That is an admission. Do you say the end is not yet?"

"I refuse to say anything," she laughs. She seems in the merriest of spirits. A rich, sweet color has flown into her cheeks ; her pretty teeth are gleaming ; her eyes have a soft defiance in them. She seems farther from regret than ever. Melancholy has certainly failed to mark her for its own. Trefusis tightens his teeth.

"That is how a woman gets out of everything," says he, with a grim smile. "But you can't get out of one fact, at all events."

"And that?"

"That my accident to-day compelled you to tears." There is something almost malignant in the triumph of his voice as he says this.

"Why should I wish to get out of it? I have already confessed to it. I like to be human," says Terry.

"Was it only humanity?"

"Only,—only." She raises her charming head, and smiles full in his eyes. A ray of pale moonlight has caught her, and makes her even more beautiful than she already is. A waste of the goodly moon. Her eyes seem to claim his, to compel them to look

at her and see the absolute freedom that lies in hers. She has laid one slender hand upon the railings near him, and Trefusis, a little angered by her persistent defiance of him, lays his hand upon it.

She drags it away with passionate haste.

"Don't!" says she, under her breath.

"Not even so much! Why, in the old days when you hated me, you——"

"Where lies the difference between those old days and these?" she demands. She has turned upon him as though endurance is no longer possible. "If I hated you then, why should I not hate you now? And what is it to you whether I hate you or love you? There," contemptuously, "go, go!"

She sweeps past him, with her scornful eyes still fixed on his. Suddenly she lowers them, to hide a quick rush of tears, but too late.

He has seen them.

As she passes through the open window into the drawing-room, Trefusis runs down the steps to the garden below: his thoughts carry him so far that he does not return to the house again until the dancing is drawing to its close.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Now never from him do I part;  
Hosanna evermore I cry:  
Haste his savor in my heart,  
And bid all praise him, as do I.

As he comes into the dancing-room he pauses at the door. Mr. Kitts is lounging gracefully against one of the sides, talking volubly, and making the most open and disgraceful love (considering he doesn't mean a word of it), to the maiden of bashful fifteen. Trefusis, looking over his head, sees Terry.

She is standing near the opposite door-way, that leads to the drawing-room, with Laurence on one side of her, and a fat young man, with something about his hair or his collar that proclaims him a soldier, on the other. Both young men are talking at once, and Terry is looking embarrassed.

Trefusis goes straight to her. "Will you dance this with me?"

"Oh, a third claimant!" she cries, lifting her brows. "Mr. Morland says I have promised it to him, Larry says I gave it to him. We are trying to find a little light somewhere."

"I am really sure, Miss O'More, you gave it to me," says the fat young man.

"I'm sure too," says Laurence, inflexibly.

"I wrote it down here," says Morland, holding up his cuff to the lamplight above him, and struggling with the remarkable ciphers upon it.

"What does your cuff say, Mr. Morland?" asks Terry.

"It—er—it's got a bit mixed," says Morland, with disgust. "Can't make it out."

"Then what's to be done?" says Terry, with pretty anxiety.

"I'll tell you," says Trefusis. He looks at Laurence. "Whilst you and Morland are making up your minds, Miss O'More will dance this waltz with me."

He passes his arm round Terry's slender waist; she sways towards him; in an instant they are mingling with the other dancers.

"I told you you were masterful," says Terry, as they stop.

"Yes. I remember. I don't deny it this time." Something in his tone strikes her as different,—repressed, but full of fire. There is a strange triumphant light in his eyes.

"I have made you mine for a moment, in spite of——"

"What?" The question drops from her involuntarily. She is shocked by something in his face she hardly understands.

"In spite of *you*!"

Again his arm closes round her, and again, half against her will, she is dancing down the long room



within his arms,—arms that seem to clasp her closer. Coming to the door where he had seen her with the two young disputants, the door that opens on the drawing-room, he checks her, and, bringing her to a full stop, leads her through the drawing-room to the balcony beyond. It is a balcony that runs along the whole side of the house, and Trefusis hurries her on to where a window opens into a tiny boudoir, Fanny's writing-room. Within, the soft pink light of a lowered lamp can be seen; out here the moon, now at its height, is shedding a tender brilliance over all the garden. A silence falls on them.

"What a night!" says Terry, at last, in a low voice. A sudden sense of fear has fallen upon her. His manner surely has changed, and why does he not speak? The silence has become terrible, unendurable to her, before she breaks it. There was something determined, high-handed, a little violent almost, in the air with which he had taken her away from Laurence, and now——

"That is the second time we have ever danced together," says he, ignoring, as though he has not heard it, her faint remark. "The first—do you remember it?"

Again that compelling of her memory to a past that for him at least is dead. A passion of anger against him, rising in her heart, breaks all bounds. She turns on him, her lovely eyes flashing fire into his, while her lips grow pale, and her whole sweet slender body is trembling visibly.

"Remember ! remember !" cries she, throwing out her hands. "Do you ever let me forget? And why do you want me to remember? What is it all to you?"

"Something ; and you remember." He has taken a step closer to her.

"Is that your revenge?" asks she, in a little strangled tone. "To compel me to keep alive the past. How will that benefit you or me? Say I behaved badly to you—well, I admit it, but——"

"What?" he interrupts her, brusquely. "You admit it, then? You acknowledge that you did your best to break my heart?" He has caught her by both arms.

"Yours ! yours !" says she. Her voice fails her. Great tears rise in her lustrous eyes.

She makes a faint, ineffectual struggle to loosen his hold upon her, and then gives in, standing crushed, beaten, with drooping head, on which the unkindly moon is now shedding too bright a ray. He can see the trouble of her soul.

It seems to give him high courage.

"Even mine." He lets one of his hands fall from her arms, but, still holding her, moves towards the room beyond.

"Come in here : I want to speak to you." Reluctantly, involuntarily, she goes with him, crossing the sill of the window and entering the little warm and scented room with a strange sense of newness.

The lights are burning very dimly, and the per-

fume of heliotrope and roses mingled is sweetening the air. He turns to her as they cross the threshold.

"There are tears in your eyes," he says. "For what?"

He waits as if for an answer, but none comes.

Only her pretty head droops lower.

"Ah!" he cries, "they are for me. You dare not deny it. You"—he pauses, as if his breath is troubling him, and then—"you thought you did not love me in those old days. But you did. You know it now!"

The triumph of his voice ceases. Terry presses her hands tightly against her breast. Anguish leaves her dumb. And what is there to be done, or said? The awful knowledge, too, that tears are gathering, hateful betraying tears, beneath her lids, renders her almost desperate.

If only, only she could get away before——

No time is given her, however.

With a strong and deliberate movement Trefusis takes her into his arms, and, holding her to him a moment, kisses her passionately,—not once only.

Pressing her hands against his breast, as if to keep him off, she looks up at him. The transformation in her face must be clear to him. Her eyes, within that pale sweet face, shine like two happy stars.

She stands trembling before him: what does it all mean? A sentence of death an hour ago, and now a glimpse of heaven! Who can explain this thing?

Her eyes are fixed on his. She would have with-

drawn them if she could, but, as if spellbound, they rest on his. Tears rise and drown them, and hover on the brink of her pretty lids, yet she cannot withdraw her gaze. It is true? True?

Oh, yes, it *is* true!

His lips are pressed against the tear-filled eyes now, softly, adoringly.

"Darling, darling eyes!" says he, in a subdued but passionate whisper. Then—"Terry, you love me!"

"Yes," faintly. She is clinging to him. :

"And you are going to marry me this time?" As he holds her clasped close to his heart, a laugh escapes him,—a happy laugh. All his old reserve seems to have deserted him. Truly she has taught him many things. She slips her arm round his neck. A soft sweet sigh escapes her lips.

"Oh, what a long, long time you were away!" says she, brokenly.

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